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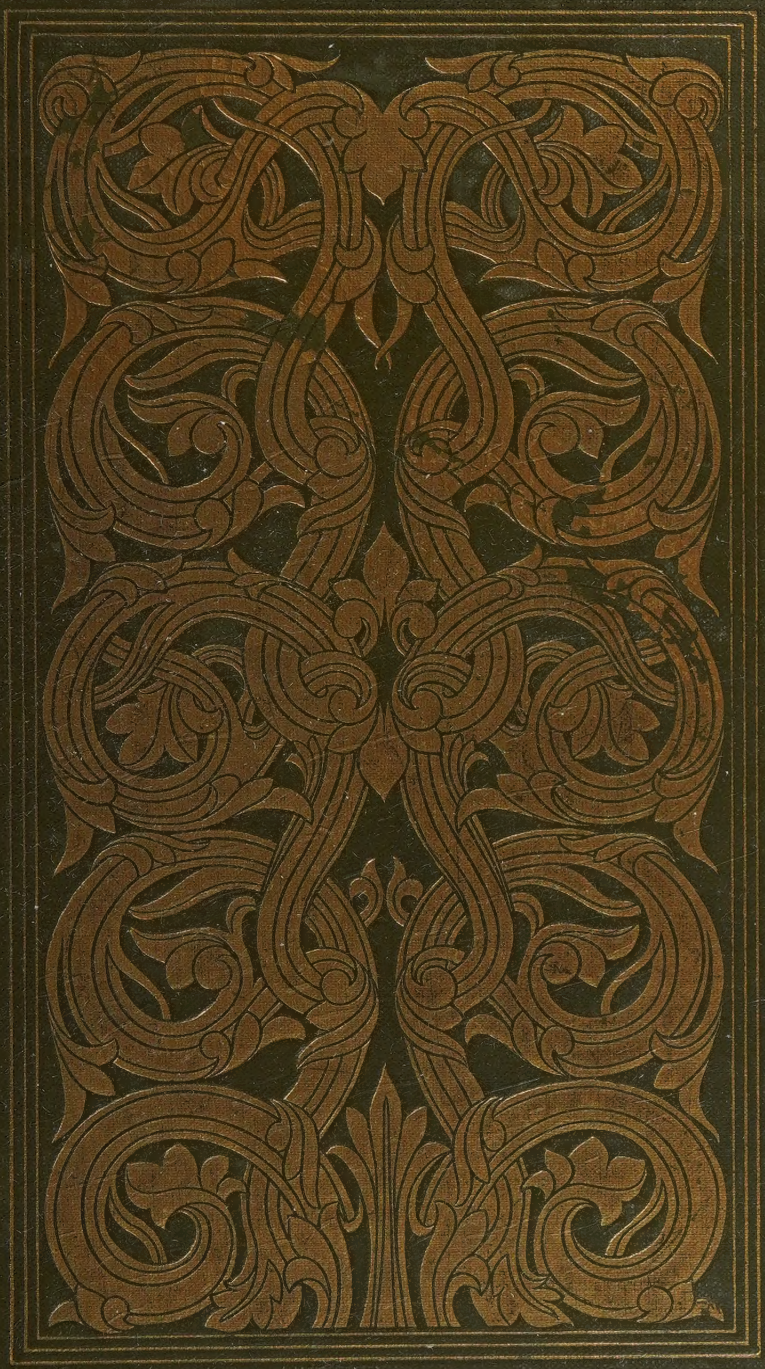

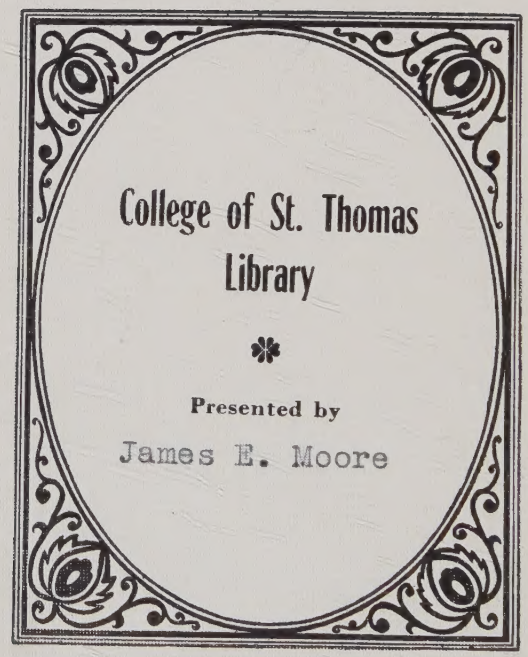


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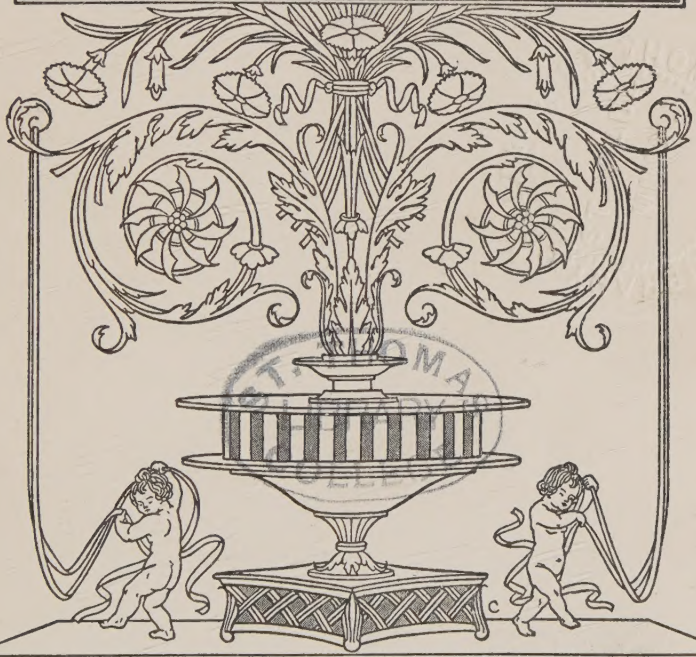
# THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI VOLUME I

# THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI
## WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CELLINI BY THE SAME HAND TOGETHER WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS EDITION UPON BENVENUTO CELLINI, ARTIST AND WRITER, BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ WITH REPRODUCTIONS OF FORTY ORIGINAL PORTRAITS AND VIEWS ILLUSTRATING THE LIFE



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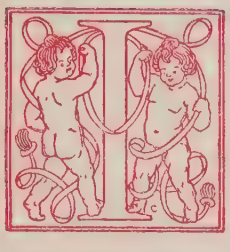
BENVENUTO CELLINI
ARTIST AND WRITER

# BENVENUTO CELLINI

## ARTIST AND WRITER

BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ



N "La Cousine Bette" Balzac has an illuminating note on one phase of the artistic temperament. He is speaking of Wenceslas Steinbock, the sculptor, and of the way in which his statue of Marshal Montcornet somehow fails to get itself turned into a masterpiece. Describing the Pole as wasting a large proportion of his time in talking about the statue instead of working at it, he thus continues: "He talked admirably about art, and in the eyes of the world he maintained his reputation as a great artist by his powers of conversation and criticism. There are many clever men in Paris who spend their lives in talking themselves out, and are content with a sort of drawing-room celebrity. . . . At the same time, these half artists are delightful; men like them and cram them with praise; they even seem superior to the true artists, who are taxed with conceit, unsociableness, contempt of the laws of society." Benvenuto Cellini was a kind of Steinbock. He had an immense amount of energy, but he did not concentrate it and send it through the right channels with the devoted instinct of the great artist. The parallel is not to be overdone. Indeed, if we carry it too far, it is bound to break down, for Cellini was every inch a man, and there is a deplorably effeminate weakness about

Wenceslas. But there is no denying that where the Italian was vulnerable was in just that foible which Balzac, in his penetrating way, hits off so well. He talked too much. He was of too impulsive a habit to make immortal statues. There was too much vehemence about him, he used too many gestures, and it seems the most natural thing in the world that his fame should be preserved in a work of literature rather than in a work of art. The Autobiography is his best monument, better even than the Perseus. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to allow this fact to obscure the very interesting question of his relation to Italian art. Too often has eagerness to get at the Autobiography inclined writers to pass indifferently over Cellini's achievements as a goldsmith and sculptor. It is true that M. Plon's book does not err in this direction, and that only eight years ago Mr. C. R. Ashbee took the pains to translate Cellini's technical "Trattati," and to print his version in luxurious form. But when the Autobiography is at all to the fore it seems to abate discussion of the things for which Cellini himself had, after all, the most concern. I think it is worth while, therefore, to speak of those things on the present occasion.

One of the most delightful of the many paradoxes of the Italian Renaissance is its treatment of the professional idea. Never was there a time in which men were keener on preserving the integrity of their various guilds; the youth apprenticed to any one of the numerous branches of art that had then each its clearly

fixed status was impelled by all the influences of the period to make the independence and the importance of his chosen branch a point of honour. It was a time of intense personal pride. Yet it was a time, too, of extraordinary give and take in the arts. The architect and the sculptor, for example, met one another halfway. It is significant that in the very dawn of plastic art in Italy it is an entirely utilitarian project that stirs creative genius to activity. It is as an architect, no less than as a sculptor, that Niccola Pisano undertakes to construct the hexagonal pulpit for the baptistery at Pisa, and it would be difficult to say where the architect leaves off and the sculptor begins in the transformation of this tribune, made for a practical purpose, into an essentially decorative object. In other words, when the journeyman stone-carver subsides into the background and the sculptor—which is to say the stone-carver of individual genius—takes his place, the change is effected amid conditions which keep sculpture a craft as well as an art; and this situation endures for generations, modified in many ways as different types of personal force arise, but true, in the main, to the broad instinct at which we have just glanced. That instinct was a sound one. The man of the Renaissance knew that art embraced not only the greater but the lesser, and that it was as much worth his while, when the chance offered, to do an ordinary bit of craftsmanship as to produce some elaborate *tour de force*. Thus you find the pulpits of the Pisani, their Fonte Maggiore at Perugia,

or Jacopo della Quercia's Fonte Gaia at Siena, succeeded by triumphs of pure craftsmanship like the pulpit at Prato which Donatello and Michelozzo did together, or like any of those countless sepulchral monuments of which Desiderio's tomb for Cardinal Marsuppini, in Santa Croce, is perhaps the most conclusive type. Verrocchio, with the power in him to do a thing like the Colleoni at Venice, approaches with the same creative ardour, the same impassioned feeling for beauty, not only that heroic equestrian statue, but the Medici tomb in the sacristy of San Lorenzo at Florence, a tomb of wholly formal decoration. The point of view is in each case the same. "Make the work beautiful," he says, "no matter what its form may be." He makes it so, and incidentally he helps to establish a tradition. The spirit of the man of genius was shared, in a measure, even by the mediocrity, and as you look over the whole mass of Renaissance work in stone, metal, or, for that matter, any material, you are struck by the way in which craftsmanship is raised to a higher power. A certain largeness of feeling is in the air, and a lantern wrought by some Florentine to-day unknown, a setting given to a jewel at a shop whose proprietor, even in his lifetime, never had any celebrity whatever, bears the same stamp that you find on the noblest productions of the era. Why was that stamp not recaptured by Cellini? He had the sincerity of his predecessors, and their zeal. What he lacked was that something, next to impossible to define, which seems more the property of an

age than of any one individual.

It is the fashion in these scientific days to put the "document" in the foreground and leave "the spirit of things" to take care of itself, as a volatile, tricksy quality, full of danger for the unwary. "There never was an artistic period," said Mr. Whistler. "There never was an art-loving nation." That kind of a remark wears a convincing air. For a moment one hesitates to contradict. But he who hesitates in this matter is unquestionably lost. You cannot put your finger on some unmistakable source of inspiration in fifteenth-century Italy and say that it acted automatically, making masters out of all the artists coming within the range of its influence. But you can discern at this time an element which presently disappears, a general atmosphere, dominant in Italian life, which, for the artist, serves both as a stimulus and as a check upon his professional conscience. This atmosphere dies down as the great body of creative artists shrinks in size, and in all things, in politics and in social life as well as in art, Italy begins to show signs of exhaustion, of decadence. Traditions survive, but in a sadly debilitated condition. Cellini cherishes the highest ideals of goldsmithing, and it is plain from the opening pages of his treatise on that subject that he considered himself as one of the line of Ghiberti, Pollaiuolo, Donatello and Verrocchio; but he was nothing of the sort. The gods had begun to withdraw their gifts from Italy when Cellini saw the light in 1500. In truth they had lingered in lavish

mood for a long time. They had given Italy the Pisani and Jacopo della Quercia. Then had come Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, Donatello and Luca della Robbia and his kin, and, as though this were not enough, man after man was sent into the world to make Italian sculpture worthy of Italian painting. Besides artists cast in giant mould like Donatello or Verrocchio, there were any number of sculptors so accomplished that they can scarcely be dismissed as forming, in a colourless way, the rank and file. Higher praise than that must go to Desiderio da Settigano or the Rosellini; to Mino or to Pollaiuolo; to Matteo Civitali or to Benedetto da Maiano. Nor was Tuscany alone thus bountifully endowed. Pisanello and Matteo de Pasti had been showing at Verona how the Renaissance medal might be made to rival the antique coin. Other masters might be cited from other regions. The country everywhere had more or less reason to congratulate itself on its sculptors. Then the effort seems to be too much of a strain, a kind of blight falls upon plastic art, and only one figure, that of Michael Angelo, continues to illustrate the grand style down into the sixteenth century.

It is as though fate had done all that could be done to place models of what sculpture should be before Cellini, but had grudged him the voiceless whisper, the invisible spark, the impalpable something in the air, which had thrilled the generations just preceding his own, and had caused masterpieces to appear before men as nature causes fruits and flowers to

issue forth from the sun-warmed earth. In a word, Cellini's limitations, which are to be ascribed first and last to the caprice of destiny, are understood the better if we remember the character of the period into which he was born. It needed a fiercer, more masterful nature than his—and his was masterful and fierce enough in all conscience—to conquer the deadening tendency of the time. One might say that it was pathetic, too,—if pathos had not a certain incongruity where Cellini is concerned,—to observe the depth and strength of his faculty of appreciation. He knew the right thing when it was put before him, and there is nothing more ingratiating about him than the gusto with which he lauds a great artist. He alludes to Leonardo as "a veritable angel incarnate;" and of "that divinest painter," Michael Angelo, he speaks with positively passionate warmth. The treatment of the moving soldiers in the famous cartoon of "The Bathers" moves him to this outburst: "He drew them at the very moment the alarm is sounded, and the men all naked run to arms; so splendid is their action that nothing survives of ancient or of modern art which touches the same lofty point of excellence." When Cosimo de Medici asked him to model a Perseus for the Loggia dei Lanzi, which was already adorned by Donatello's "Judith" and Michael Angelo's "David," he replied after this fashion: "Most excellent, my lord, upon the piazza are now standing works by the great Donatello and the incomparable Michael Angelo, the two greatest men who have

ever lived since the days of the ancients. But since your Excellence encourages my model with such praise, I feel the heart to execute it at least thrice as well in bronze." Precisely—he had the heart, but that was not enough. For his readiness to apprehend the true stature of a Michael Angelo, a Donatello or a Leonardo he is to be honoured, especially as the taste of his contemporaries, while still impressed with a sense of Michael Angelo's grandeur, steadily drifted, all through the sixteenth century, toward such types as Bandinelli, Ammanati, John of Bologna and the like, as though the stars in their courses were fighting to prepare the way for the seventeenth-century *poseur*, Bernini. But Cellini's superior judgment was not matched by his abilities, and even in his admirations he was not always as fortunate as he was enlightened. There is a kind of tragic irony in the enthusiasm that swept him to the feet of Michael Angelo, who, breathing the airs of an apocalyptic world, was just the mighty exemplar for a delicate craftsman like Cellini to avoid.

That is what, as an artist, Cellini was, a delicate craftsman, with one great difference between himself and those fifteenth-century masters with whom, as I have indicated, art and craftsmanship were often made one and the same thing. He could not give to his work, even at its finest, that exquisiteness in grain, that subtle beauty of surface, that haunting personal note, which the earlier men achieved simply because, as it seems to me, their whole natures, their

very souls, were in harmony with the tremendous inspiration prevailing in the life about them. Pisanello can give one of his portrait medals the massive dignity of an antique sculpture or of a painting by Mantegna. Verrocchio, making the Medici tomb of San Lorenzo, has some magic in his fingers which saturates in beauty the simple leafage of bronze with which he embellishes the porphyry sarcophagus, and that touch of his performs the same mysterious office for the network of bronze rope that fills up the rest of the opening in the design. Cellini could not have made one of those medals, he could not have made that net of twisted rope, though his life had depended on it. It was his genius, instead, to be supremely clever. Read the pages in which he tells how to do filigree work, how to set an emerald or to tint a diamond, how to make a seal or a medal, and you can almost catch the flash of the shrewd eye, you can almost hear the self-confident, dogmatic voice as it exposes to you some of the secrets of the trade. He was the Rue de la Paix *in excelsis*, an inspired shop-keeper, not an inspired artist. He could do anything he liked—with his hands. It was when qualities less ponderable were needed that he was at a disadvantage. Intellect, spirituality, fine feeling, these are the resources that he lacked as an artist. When he produces the famous salt-cellar for Francis I., now at Vienna, he makes the first stage of the work an affair of reasonably just proportions, but then he models the figures in the round on too large a scale, and

in style as well as in bulk detaches them from the spirit of the design considered as a goldsmith's design. He is both goldsmith and sculptor in this renowned piece, but awkwardly, and to the advantage of neither the one nor the other. A master of the early Renaissance would have known how to exploit both professions, on an occasion like this, in perfect harmony. Cellini is without the necessary poise. Let him do pure jeweller's work, let him design a casket or a chalice, and he is tolerably sure of himself. Give him a commission permitting him a wider scope, and, in his impetuous way, he flings himself upon the task, works like a demon, and never realizes, as he gazes upon the finished object, that he has just missed striking twelve.

Possibly his ill luck is thrown into sharper relief for us through the very fact that his more ambitious productions form such a small group—there is little chance for flaws to be overlooked. The Perseus is, of course, the salient member of that group, but before alluding to it I must refer to the work which has always seemed to me, more than any other, to reflect upon Cellini the kind of credit which doubtless he most craved, the kind that goes to the sculptor in the strict sense. This is the bust of Bindo Altoviti. It is a work of simple dignity, conceived in a virile mood, and executed without that teasing of the surfaces which is elsewhere so apt to be characteristic of Cellini. Michael Angelo thought well of it, writing to Cellini a note which the latter quotes with

undisguised satisfaction. "My dear Benvenuto," he says, "I have known you for many years as the greatest goldsmith of whom we have any information; and henceforward I shall know you for a sculptor of like quality. I must tell you that Master Bindo Altoviti took me to see his bust in bronze, and informed me that you made it. I was greatly pleased with the work; but it annoyed me to notice that it was placed in a bad light; for if it were suitably illuminated, it would show itself to be the fine performance that it is." One does not need to give Michael Angelo's polite expressions to a junior an exaggerated value in order to find in them the evidence that Cellini had surpassed himself in this bust. For once he seems to have fitted his style to his theme and to have carried on a piece of work from beginning to end in an unqualifiedly sculptural vein. The bust of Cosimo de' Medici is less successful because it is less simple. The ornamentation is overdone, and the whole work has an artificial, even theatrical air. When he was portraying Bindo Altoviti it is obvious that he worked from nature, endeavouring merely to get a good likeness in a straightforward way. When he undertook the bust of Cosimo we cannot help but feel that there was hovering in the back of his mind a notion that he would make his patron look as much as possible like a Roman emperor. How often was he betrayed by this confusion of mind! Nature should have had her chance, if anywhere, in that large Nymph of Fontainebleau

of his, in which the opportunity to model a nude female figure at full length should have put him on his mettle, but the figure is painfully untrue to life, and leaves not only an artificial but even a somewhat vulgar impression. The crucifix in the Escurial escapes this last danger, but, to the critical eye, its actual value as a work of religious art is far below its repute. Neither as a study of anatomical structure nor as an interpretation of a tragic theme does it rise above an ordinary level. There remains the bronze in the Loggia dei Lanzi,—the bronze which probably meant more to him than anything he did in the course of his whole career.

He seems to have been attracted at once by the subject when Cosimo proposed it to him, and, as we have seen from the words to the Duke already quoted, he was fired with the desire to show that he could produce a statue worthy of association with works by Donatello and Michael Angelo. The history of the enterprise is sufficiently traversed in the Autobiography and so need not be further dealt with here, nor, for that matter, need we pause very long upon the Perseus itself. The wax model, which is still preserved at Florence, shows that Cellini started with a capital idea, producing a lithe, slender figure of good proportions, and arranging it, with the headless body trampled under foot, in a composition both picturesque and graceful. If we look at the figure in the Loggia, enlarged, and marked everywhere with the signs of Cellini's meti-

WAX MODEL FOR THE PERSEUS
( FLORENCE )

culous craftsmanship, and if, as we look, we deliberately put out of mind the whole dramatic story of its casting, so that no elements of personal sympathy are left to affect our view of the matter, we are constrained to admit that the sculptor lost his grasp on his original idea as the work went on. The Perseus should have been executed in silver on a modest scale, it should have been made not a statue but a statuette. As it is, Cellini strove in vain to rise to the level of his great opportunity. Once more the sculptor and the craftsman in him were antipathetic where they should have worked together, and he fell, as it were, between two stools. The Perseus is brittle, finikin, where it should be heroic, and at the same time it is badly proportioned and heavy where it should have been light and elegant. Cellini was in his prime when he put forth this dearest work of his ambition, and by it his rank as an artist may fairly be fixed. It is the subordinate rank of a temperament that paid the penalty of its own ingratiating vivacity. Cellini himself, in his account of his life, suggests that he was not steadfast enough to reach perfection in any form of art, that he relied too much on the sudden jet of emotion, on the excitement which goes with the *tour de force*. One suspects that he would sometimes take up a task in a fury of interest and then execute it with doubtful success, largely for the reason that it had ceased to appeal to him, only a sort of burning pride keeping him at it. It was not for him to penetrate gravely, tenderly, into

the heart of things, to explore the secrets of nature in a passion of awed delight, and then to realize some splendid conception with the noble authority of a Donatello, a Verrocchio or a Michael Angelo. But he was to win his reward when, in his fifty-eighth year, he crowned his lifelong indulgence in what he himself called "natural bragging" with the writing of his Autobiography.

There are half a dozen different points of view from which this famous book appears in a good light. To begin with, in interesting the world in Cellini, it has interested the world in his works, and has thus fostered the fame of the latter. Secondly, these pages are invaluable for the pictures they contain of Italian society in the author's day. He touched life at many points, mingling not only with artists but with princes and prelates. He had a "devouring" eye and a good memory. A thing once seen stayed in his mind; a thing once heard by him was well remembered, and when he dictated his memoirs he gave them the vitality of a daily journal. Moreover, he was of the race of Boccaccio, which is to say that he was a born story-teller, a man who naturally dramatised his experiences as he came to relate them, making the most of a personality or a situation, and, above all, flinging over everything an air of reality, of movement. How far did he swerve from the facts, if he swerved at all, in the framing of this wonderful narrative? It is practically impossible to say, but I am not sure that the point is, in the last resort, of any

serious consequence. The late John Addington Symonds was at some pains to demonstrate that Cellini was neither base nor a liar. He made out an excellent case for his hero, and it were ungracious to quarrel with his conclusions, for Symonds not only made the best translation of the Autobiography that has ever been produced, but was so saturated with his subject through years of preoccupation with Italian art and history that his opinion necessarily carries great weight. Yet there are passages in Cellini's life which it is idle to estimate as having any justification whatever in morals, and I cannot for the life of me see why, in the circumstances, we should assume that he was not, when occasion demanded, a rousing good liar. Why should he not have been a liar? Is a man who is capable of malicious mischief, of murder, and of ways of living which are perhaps better left unmentioned, any the better company because he always told the truth, or any the worse because he now and then lied? The question is immaterial. It is not by a careful balancing of his virtues and his vices that we get nearer to Cellini, and the more willing to enjoy his book. The only thing to do is to accept once and for all the fact that manners and morals in the sixteenth century were totally different from morals and manners in our own, and then to approach Benvenuto Cellini as a human being. Our examination of his work as an artist has shown clearly enough that he was no demi-god. Perusal of the Autobiography only makes us the more sure of

this. No, this book is to be read for what it is, a work in the same category with the memoirs of Casanova, "Gil Blas," and those other classics which, whether they be made of history or of fiction, appeal to the reader as being all compact of the very blood and bone of human experience.

Cellini is a master of *picaresque* literature. He loves adventure, and nothing in the world gives him quite the joy that he gets from a hand-to-hand fight. He is happy when he is at work; happy when he is foregathering with Giulio Romano or some other boon companion in Florentine Bohemia, when the day's task is done; happy when he is arguing with a patron; happy when he is driving his dagger up to the hilt in the neck of his enemy; happy, in short, whenever anything is toward that convinces him that he is alive and playing the part of a man. As he looks back over it all, his being thrills with an ineffable gusto, and small blame to him if the story loses nothing in the telling. Take, for example, the fracas which is soon reached in his narrative, the one following Gherardo Guasconti's insult. Benvenuto swoops down upon Gherardo in the midst of his family like an avenging flame. "I stabbed him in the breast," he says, "piercing doublet and jerkin through and through to the shirt, without, however, grazing his flesh or doing him the least harm in the world." He is promptly set upon in the street by "more than twelve persons," all of them crudely but effectively armed, and the fight waxes

Homeric. "When I got among them, raging like a mad bull, I flung four or five to the earth, and fell down with them myself, continually aiming my dagger now at one and now at another. Those who remained upright plied both hands with all their force, giving it me with hammers, cudgels, and anvil." Incredible as it may seem, Cellini and all of his adversaries emerged from this tremendous conflict absolutely unscathed. Cellini attributes this to the merciful intervention of a divine power. We know better. We know that the fight was, of course, not anything like so fierce as Cellini represents it to be. But would we have the record changed? Not for worlds! It is just this rich, full-bodied quality in him that makes him the absorbing narrator that he is.

He persuades you, too, because he puts what he has to say in such an artless manner. If he lies it is not in cold blood, but with the perfect good faith of a Tartarin. His story of the sack of Rome and of his achievements on the beleaguered walls of the city is superb. Perhaps he did indeed fire the shot that killed the Constable of Bourbon. Perhaps he lied about the shot, and knew he lied. But he tells of the incident with a simple sincerity that all but disarms the sceptic. It is the same with his description of his labours in the lodging to which he withdrew to melt down the gold settings—some two hundred pounds of them—from which he had, under the direction of Clement, detached the Papal jewels. According to the Autobiography, Cellini

would put a quantity of gold into the pot, and then, turning to his guns, cause "all sorts of unexpected mischief in the trenches." Again we say "Perhaps," and again, in the next moment, we grant that whether Cellini served as artilleryman and goldsmith in the same moment or not,—a pretty tall order,—he draws a picture of the scene that for vividness and dramatic interest is unimpeachable. Curiously, too, his picture apparently causes him no trouble in the painting. This maker of literature was never a literary man, never for even the smallest fraction of a second. It was probably with no very definite consciousness of just what he was doing that he gave his recollections their extraordinarily tangible form. You could not say of him that he understood the art of omission, for that implies a professional faculty, the instinct of the man of letters; yet one of the great sources of Cellini's charm is this gift for painting an episode without a superfluous touch. The commentator selecting an illustration is tempted, as a matter of course, to take one showing Cellini in a crisis of some sort, to choose the "important" passage; but I think we do him better justice if we take him in more familiar mood, if we take him when he is treating of some ordinary affair in his daily life. There is the tale of his meeting with Madonna Porzia at the Farnesina, and of her giving him a jewel to set. Flaubert himself, slaving his hardest, could not have approached the lucidity and the vitality of those three or four

pages. The way in which the artist and the lady met, the tone she used toward him, and her exit from the room in which he stayed on to finish the drawing he was making from a figure in the famous ceiling decoration—all this is sketched with the animation of life itself; and Benvenuto's succeeding labours over the jewel, and his rivalry with Lucagnolo, are handled with the same power. Very little space is given to the subject, but we are made, within that little space, to live a part of Cellini's life. Glance, too, at the note, less than a page long, in which he tells of going to see Michael Angelo in Rome, and suggesting that the great man return to Florence and the service of Duke Cosimo. Little is said. Michael Angelo looks his interlocutor hard in the face and briefly answers him with a question, smiling sarcastically the while. Cellini is pressing, whereupon Michael Angelo creates a diversion by turning to his simple-minded servant. The visitor gives up his mission in despair, but he laughs as, without saying farewell, he goes from the house. It is odd, but somehow this casual fragment, which tells practically nothing, yet tells everything. The leonine head of Michael Angelo turns toward us in the dusk of the studio, and we see that sarcastic smile.

This, then, is the supreme merit of the Autobiography—that it has the dramatic reality for which we look, as a rule, only to the creative artists in literature. As for the stuff of the narrative, Cellini may have been born too late to witness the richest

developments of the Renaissance, but there were still great spirits on earth sojourning when he was born, and even those public figures that were not precisely great had characteristics, or filled positions, significant to the modern reader. Cellini fills his canvas with a generous hand. He is himself his best theme, but he draws a friend or an enemy with the same care that he bestows upon his own traits or mischances, and though he has a due sense of the powers of the great ones with whom he comes in contact, it is with a quite unhampered brush that he introduces Pope or mundane potentate upon the scene. He speaks of artists and their work with the intimate accent of Vasari, and with a robuster, warmer, more roughly human element of appreciation in his voice. He is, as I said at the beginning, every inch a man, and it is a man's report of what he did and felt and saw that he gives us,—a report wanting in the niceties of literary form, darkened by prejudice and passion, but, in its spirit, a thing genuine as the man himself was genuine.

# INTRODUCTION
# BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

COSIMO DE' MEDICI
WITH CELLINI AND OTHER ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS
(VASARI)

# INTRODUCTION

## BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

I

HE translator of an autobiography, especially if it be a long one like Cellini's, or like Rousseau's *Confessions*, enjoys very special opportunities for becoming acquainted with the mind and temper of its writer. No other method of study, however conscientious, can be compared in this particular respect with the method of translation; in no other way is it possible to get such knowledge of a man's mental and emotional habits, to judge the value of his accent and intonation so accurately, or to form by gradual and subtle processes so sympathetic a conception of his nature. The translator is obliged to live for weeks and months in close companionship with his author. He must bend his own individuality to the task of expressing what is characteristic in that of another. He tastes and analyses every turn of phrase in order to discover its exact significance. He taxes the resources of his own language, so far as these may be at his command, to reproduce the most evasive no less than the most salient expressions of the text before him. In the case even of a poem or a dissertation, he ought, upon this method, to arrive at more precise conclusions than the student who has only been a reader. But when the text is a self-revelation, when it is a minute and voluminous autobiography, he will have done little

short of living himself for awhile into the personality of another. Supposing him at the same time to be possessed of any discernment, he will be able afterwards to speak of the man whose spirit he has attempted to convey, with the authority of one who has learned to know him *intus et in cute*—bones, marrow, flesh, and superficies. Nor is the translator exposed to the biographer's weakness for overvaluing his subject. He pretends to no discoveries, has taken no brief for or against the character it is his duty to reproduce, has set up no full-length portrait on the literary easel, to be painted by the aid of documents, and with a certain preconceived conception of pictorial harmony. In so far as it is possible to enter into personal intercourse with any one whose voice we have not heard, whose physical influences we have not been affected by, in whose living presence we have not thought, and felt, and acted, in so far the translator of a book like Cellini's *Memoirs* or Rousseau's *Confessions* can claim to be familiar and intimate with its author.

II

I have recently put myself into these very confidential relations with Cellini, having made the completely new English version of his autobiography to which the following pages serve as introduction. I think that I am therefore justified in once more handling a somewhat hackneyed subject, and in rectifying what I have previously published concerning it.[1]

A book which the great Goethe thought worthy

[1] *Renaissance in Italy, vol. iii. ch. viii.*

of translating into German with the pen of *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*, a book which Auguste Comte placed upon his very limited list for the perusal of reformed humanity, is one with which we have the right to be occupied, not once or twice, but over and over again. It cannot lose its freshness. What attracted the encyclopædic minds of men so different as Comte and Goethe to its pages still remains there. This attractive or compulsive quality, to put the matter briefly, is the flesh and blood reality of Cellini's self-delineation. A man stands before us in his *Memoirs* unsophisticated, unembellished, with all his native faults upon him, and with all his potent energies portrayed in the veracious manner of Velasquez, with bold strokes and animated play of light and colour. No one was less introspective than this child of the Italian Renaissance. No one was less occupied with thoughts about thinking or with the presentation of psychological experience. Vain, ostentatious, self-laudatory, and self-engrossed as Cellini was, he never stopped to analyse himself. He attempted no artistic blending of *Dichtung und Wahrheit;* the word "confessions" could not have escaped his lips; a *Journal Intime* would have been incomprehensible to his fierce, virile spirit. His autobiography is the record of action and passion. Suffering, enjoying, enduring, working with restless activity; hating, loving, hovering from place to place as impulse moves him; the man presents himself dramatically by his deeds and spoken words, never by his ponderings or meditative broodings. It is this healthy externality which gives its great charm to Cellini's

self-portrayal and renders it an imperishable document for the student of human nature.

In addition to these solid merits, his life, as Horace Walpole put it, is "more amusing than any novel." We have a real man to deal with—a man so realistically brought before us that we seem to hear him speak and see him move; a man, moreover, whose eminently characteristic works of art in a great measure still survive among us. Yet the adventures of this potent human actuality will bear comparison with those of Gil Blas, or the Comte de Monte Cristo, or Quentin Durward, or Les Trois Mousquetaires, for their variety and ever-pungent interest.

In point of language, again, Cellini possesses an advantage which places him at least upon the level of the most adroit romance-writers. Unspoiled by literary training, he wrote precisely as he talked, with all the sharp wit of a born Florentine, heedless of grammatical construction, indifferent to rhetorical effects, attaining unsurpassable vividness of narration by pure simplicity. He was greatly helped in gaining the peculiar success he has achieved by two circumstances; first, that he dictated nearly the whole of his *Memoirs* to a young amanuensis; secondly, that the distinguished academical writer to whose correction he submitted them refused to spoil their ingenuous grace by alterations or stylistic improvements. While reading his work, therefore, we enjoy something of that pleasure which draws the folk of Eastern lands to listen to the recitation of Arabian Nights' entertainments.

III

But what was the man himself? It is just this question which I have half promised to answer, implying that, as a translator, I have some special right to speak upon the topic.

Well, then: I seem to know Cellini first of all as a man possessed by intense, absorbing egotism; violent, arrogant, self-assertive, passionate; conscious of great gifts for art, physical courage, and personal address. Without having read a line of Machiavelli, he had formed the same ideal of *virtù* or manly force of character as the author of *The Prince*. To be self-reliant in all circumstances; to scheme and strike, if need be, in support of his opinion or his right; to take the law into his own hands for the redress of injury or insult: this appeared to him the simple duty of an honourable man. But he had nothing of the philosopher's calm, the diplomatist's prudence, the general's strategy, or the courtier's self-restraint. On the contrary, he possessed the temperament of a born artist, blent in almost equal proportions with that of a born bravo. Throughout the whole of his tumultuous career these two strains contended in his nature for mastery. Upon the verge of fifty-six, when a man's blood has generally cooled, we find that he was released from prison on bail, and bound over to keep the peace for a year with some enemy whose life was probably in danger; and when I come to speak about his homicides, it will be obvious that he enjoyed killing live men quite as much as casting bronze statues.

IV.

Both the artist and the bravo were characteristic and typical products of the Italian Renaissance. The genius of the race expressed itself at that epoch even more saliently in the fine arts than in scholarship or literature. At the same time the conditions of society during what I have elsewhere called "the Age of the Despots" favoured the growth of lawless adventurers, who made a practice of violence and lived by murder. Now these two prominent types of the nation and the period were never more singularly combined than in Cellini. He might stand as a full-blown specimen of either. Sensitive, impulsive, rash of speech, hasty in action, with the artist's susceptibility and the bravo's heat of blood, he injured no one more than himself by his eccentricities of temper. Over and over again did he ruin excellent prospects by some piece of madcap folly. Yet there is no trace in any of his writings that he ever laid his misadventures to the proper cause. He consistently poses as an injured man, whom malevolent scoundrels and malignant stars conspired to persecute. Nor does he do this with any bad faith. His belief in himself remained as firm as adamant, and he candidly conceived that he was under the special providence of a merciful and loving God, who appreciated his high and virtuous qualities.

On one occasion, after a more than customary outbreak of violent speech, the Lucchese ambassador remarked to his patron, Cosimo de' Medici, "That Benvenuto of yours is a terrible man!" "Yes," an-

swered the Duke, "he is far more terrible than you imagine. Well were it for him if he were a little less so, for then he would have possessed much which he now lacks."[1] Cellini reports this speech with satisfaction; he is proud to be called terrible—a word which then denoted formidable vehemence.[2] On another occasion he tells us how Pope Paul III. was willing to pardon him for an outrageous murder committed in the streets of Rome. One of the Pope's gentlemen submitted that this was showing unseasonable clemency. "You do not understand the matter as well as I do," replied his Holiness. "I must inform you that men like Benvenuto, unique in their profession, are not bound by the laws."[3] That sentence precisely paints Cellini's own conception of himself; and I believe that something to the like effect may really have been spoken by Pope Paul. Certainly our artist's frequent homicides and acts of violence were condoned by great princes, who wished to avail themselves of his exceptional ability. Italian society admired the bravo almost as much as Imperial Rome admired the gladiator; it also assumed that genius combined with force of character released men from the shackles of ordinary morality. These points are so clear to any student of the sixteenth century that I need not here enlarge upon them. It is only ne-

[1] *Vita di Benvenuto Cellini, lib. ii. ch. c.*

[2] *Compare the following passage from a memorandum written by Cellini: "Mi fu risposto da un gran gentilhuomo di corte, il quale non mi disse altro se non che io ero un terribile huomo; e repricandani più volte questo nome di terribile, io gli risposi che i terribli si erano quegli strumenti che si empierano di incenso sol per honorare Iddio." — Trattati, &c., p. xlii.*

[3] *Vita di Benvenuto Cellini, lib. i. ch. lxxiv.*

cessary to keep them steadily in mind while forming an estimate of Cellini's temperament and conduct; at the same time we must not run to the conclusion that people of his stamp were common, even at that time, in Italy. We perceive plainly from his self-complacent admissions that the peculiar hybrid between the gifted artist and the man of blood which he exhibited was regarded as something not quite normal.

V

Such being the groundwork of Cellini's nature, it follows as a necessary consequence that his self-conceit was prodigious. Each circumstance of his life appeared to him a miracle. Great though his talents were, he vastly overrated them, and set a monstrously exaggerated value on his works of art. The same qualities made him a fierce and bitter rival: he could not believe that any one with whom he came into collision had the right to stand beside him. This did not prevent him from being a clear-sighted and impartial critic. His admiration for Michel Angelo Buonarroti amounted to fanaticism. He properly appreciated Raphael, and gave the just amount of praise to Sansovino, Primaticcio, and Rosso —three artists with whom he was not on the best of terms. Nor will any one deny that his unfavourable estimates of Bandinelli and Ammanati were justified. Indeed, contemporaries acknowledged the wholesomeness of his sound, outspoken criticism. When Vasari's abominable frescoes on the cupola of the Florentine cathedral were exposed to view, the witty Lasca wrote as follows:

*"Pur fra color, che son di vita privi,*
*Vivo vorrei Benvenuto Cellini,*
*Che senza alcun ritegno o barbezzale*
*Delle cose malfatte dicea male,*
*E la cupola al mondo singolare*
*Non si potea di lodar mai saziare;*
*E la solea chiamare,*
*Alzandola alle stelle,*
*La maraviglia delle cose belle;*
*Certo non capirebbe or nella pelle,*
*In tal guisa dipintala veggendo;*
*E saltando e correndo e fulminando,*
*S' andrebbe querelando,*
*E per tutto gridando ad alta voce,*
*Giorgin d' Arezzo metterebbe in croce."* [1]

VI

In spite of his vehemence and passion, Cellini had not depth or tenacity of feeling. His amours were numerous, but volatile and indiscriminate. As a friend he seems to have been somewhat uncertain; not treacherous, but wayward. Hospitable indeed and generous he proved himself by his conduct toward Italians in Paris, and by his thoroughgoing kindness for the Sputasenni family in Florence. Still, if anything, either in love or comradeship, crossed his humour, he sacrificed emotion to vanity. Like many egotistical people, he extended the affection he felt

[1] *"Fain would I recall to life Benvenuto Cellini, who without reserve or restraint spoke evil of things ill done; he used to exalt our cupola with indefatigable praise as something unique in the world; he called it the miracle of beauteous masterpieces. Assuredly that man would jump out of his skin with rage to see it thus bedaubed; leaping and running and fulminating, he would go about the city uttering his indignation at the top of his voice, and would crucify this little George of Arezzo."*

for himself to the members of his immediate family. On the whole, he was a good and dutiful son, although he caused his poor old father great uneasiness by running away from home, because one of his sisters had given his new suit of clothes to his only brother. For this brother, a brave soldier of the same stormy sort as Benvenuto, he entertained at the same time, and always, a really passionate love. The young man, named Cecchino, assassinated a constable in the streets of Rome, and was wounded in the squabble which ensued. He died of the wound; but though the officer who fired his arquebuse had done this only in self-defence, Benvenuto tracked him down one night and murdered him. Not a syllable of remorse escapes his lips. Men like himself and Cecchino had the right to slay; and if their opponents managed to checkmate such virtuous fellows, they must be punished. The best recorded actions of Cellini concern his conduct toward a sister and six daughters, for whose sake he quitted a splendid situation in France, and whom he supported by his industry at Florence; yet he does not boast about this sustained and unselfish exercise of domestic piety. He was, finally, much attached to his legitimate children, though almost brutally indifferent about a natural daughter whom he left behind in Paris.

VII

The religious feelings of this singular personage deserve to be considered. They were indisputably sincere, and I have no doubt that Cellini turned, as he

asserts, in all his difficulties with hearty faith to God. But, like the majority of Italians in his age, he kept religion as far apart from morality as can be. His God was not the God of holiness, chastity, and mercy, but the fetish who protected him and understood him better than ungrateful men. He was emphatically, moreover, the God who "aids such folk as aid themselves"—a phrase frequently used in these *Memoirs*. The long and painful imprisonment which Cellini endured without just cause in the Castle of S. Angelo made a deep and, to some extent, a permanent impression on his mind. He read the Bible and composed psalms, was visited by angels and blessed with consolatory visions. About the truth of these experiences there is no doubt. The man's impressible, imaginative nature lent itself to mysticism and spiritual exaltation no less readily than to the delirium of homicidal excitement. He was just as inclined to see heaven opened when dying of misery in a dungeon as to "see red," if I may use that French term, when he met an enemy upon the burning squares of Rome in summer. The only difference was, that in the former case he posed before himself as a martyr gifted with God's special favour, in the latter as a righteous and wronged hero, whose hand and dagger God would guide. There was nothing strange in this mixture of piety and murder. The assassin of Lorenzino de' Medici—whose short narrative, by the way, reads like a chapter of Cellini's *Memoirs*—relates how, while he was running drenched with blood through Venice after the event, he took refuge in a crowded church, and fervently

commended himself to the Divine protection. Homicide, indeed, was then considered a venial error, and several incidents might be cited from this autobiography proving that men devoted to the religious life screened murderers red-handed after the commission of what we should regard not merely as criminal, but also as dastardly deeds of violence.

VIII

Among Cellini's faults I do not reckon either baseness or lying. He was not a rogue, and he meant to be veracious. This contradicts the commonplace and superficial view of his character so flatly that I must support my opinion at some length. Of course, I shall not deny that a fellow endowed with such overweening self-conceit, when he comes to write about himself, will set down much which cannot be taken entirely on trust. His personal annals will never rank as historical material with the Venetian Despatches, however invaluable the student of manners may find them. Men of his stamp are certain to exaggerate their own merits, and to pass lightly over things not favourable to the ideal they present. But this is very different from lying; and of calculated mendacity Cellini stands almost universally accused. I believe that view to be mistaken.

So far as I have learned to know him, so far as I have caught his accent and the intonation of his utterance, I hold him for a most veracious man. His veracity was not of the sort which is at present current. It had no hypocrisy or simulation in it, but a large dose of vainglory with respect to his achieve-

ments, and a trifle of suppression with respect to matters which he thought unworthy of his fame. Otherwise, he is quite transparent after his own fashion —the fashion, that is to say, of the sixteenth century, when swaggering and lawlessness were in vogue, which must be distinguished from the fashion of the nineteenth century, when modesty and order are respectable.

IX

What I have called the accent and the intonation of Cellini strikes genuinely upon my ear in the opening sentences of a letter to Benedetto Varchi. It should be premised that this distinguished historian, poet, and critic was an intimate friend of the great artist, who sent him his autobiography in MS. to read. "It gives me pleasure to hear from your worship," writes Cellini, "that you like the simple narrative of my life in its present rude condition better than if it were filed and retouched by the hand of others, in which case the exact accuracy with which I have set all things down might not be so apparent as it is. In truth, I have been careful to relate nothing whereof I had a doubtful memory, and have confined myself to the strictest truth, omitting numbers of extraordinary incidents out of which another writer would have made great capital." In a second letter to Varchi he declares himself as "bad at dictating, and worse at composing." He clearly thought that his imperfect grammar and plebeian style were more than compensated by the sincerity and veracity of his narration.

x

His own attitude with regard to truth can well be studied in the somewhat comic episode of the Duchess of Tuscany's pearls.[1] She was anxious to coax her husband into buying some pearls for her, and entreated Cellini to tell a fib or two in their favour for her sake. "Now," says Cellini, "I have always been the devoted friend of truth and the enemy of lies; yet I undertook the office, much against my will, for fear of losing the good graces of so great a princess." Accordingly, he went with "those confounded pearls" to the Duke, and having once begun to lie, exaggerated his falsehoods so clumsily that he raised suspicion. The Duke at last begged him, as he was an honest man, to say what he really thought. This appeal upset him: "I blushed up to the eyes, which filled with tears;" and on the instant he made a clean breast of the whole matter, losing thereby the favour of the Duchess, who had been shown in an unpleasing light to her lord and master. The minute accounts he has left of all his negotiations for the payment of the Perseus prove in like manner that the one thing Cellini could not do was to gain his ends by artifice and underhand transactions. On the contrary, he blurted out the bitter truth, as he conceived it, in hot blood, and clamoured with egregious presumption for what his vanity demanded. Not lying, not artfulness, but arrogance and overweening self-importance are the vices of his character.

[1] *Vita, lib. ii. ch. lxxxiii.*

XI

His portrait is drawn in this light by contemporaries. Vasari describes him as "in all his doings of high spirit, proud, lively, very quick to act, and formidably vehement; a person who knew only too well how to speak his mind to princes." Bembo, Caro, Martelli, Varchi, speak of him always in terms which would be quite inapplicable to a rogue or a liar. During his imprisonment in S. Angelo, Annibale Caro, who had known him well for several years, wrote thus to his friend Luca Martini: "I have still some hope for Benvenuto, unless his own temper should do him mischief, for that is certainly extravagant. Since he was in prison, he has never been able to refrain from saying things in his odd way, which, in my opinion, makes the Prince (Pier Luigi Farnese) uneasy as to what he may do or utter in the future. These follies, far more than any crime he has committed in the past, now compromise his safety." That passage strongly corroborates the view I have presented of Cellini's character. I might quote another letter written by Niccolò Martelli to Benvenuto in France. It begins by paying a tribute to his "distinguished talents and gracious nature," saying that any favours he may receive at the French court will not be equal to his merits, "both as a rare goldsmith and admirable draughtsman, and also as a man of liberal and open conversation with his fellows, free-handed not only to artists and friends, but also to all who seek him out; esteeming mighty cardinals no more than noble spirits in a humble station, which

is really worthy of a nature so generous as yours." These phrases might pass for merely complimentary, did they not so exactly confirm Cellini's own narrative. They give us good reason to believe that what he spoke about himself was the truth.

XII

In the next place I will adduce the opinions of two Italian critics who have been occupied with Cellini's autobiography. Antonio Cocchi, its first editor (Naples, 1730), says in his preface: "I will not conceal my belief that there are some things scattered through his narrative in blame of contemporaries to which we ought to lend a somewhat doubting ear. It is not that the author was not an impassioned friend of truth, but he may have accepted vague reports or yielded to conjectures." This admission is too cautious. It is certain that Cellini wrote his *Memoirs* in no critical spirit; and what Cocchi calls "his habit of excessive frankness, his harsh manners, readiness to take affront, and implacable hatreds," betrayed him into great unfairness when dealing with people whom he disliked. This does not, however, imply of necessity that he fabricated falsehoods against the folk he could not tolerate. Truth is ever a more trenchant weapon than mendacity in most cases. When Aretino, that unscrupulous gladiator of the pen, was asked how men might best speak evil of their neighbours, he replied: "By telling the truth—by telling the truth." And Cellini understood with keen sagacity this force of plain unvarnished statement. I take it that the most disagreeable things he said of Paul III., of Luigi Pulci,

of Baccio Bandinelli, and of Giorgio Vasari were crude verities. The manners of the period and his method of narration justify this conclusion.

Taking a wider sweep and survey of this subject, Baretti sums up the impression left upon his mind by Cellini's self-portraiture thus: "He has painted himself as brave as a French grenadier, as vindictive as a viper, superstitious to the last degree, full of eccentricity and caprice; a pleasant companion among friends, but not susceptible of affectionate attachments; rather loose in sexual relations, a bit of a traitor without being aware of it; slightly tainted with spite and envy, a braggart and vain without suspecting himself to be such; a madcap who firmly believed he was wise, circumspect, and prudent. Fully persuaded that he was a hero, he dashed this picture of himself upon the canvas without a thought of composition or reflection, just as his fiery and rapid fancy prompted. We derive from it something of the same pleasure which we feel in contemplating a terrible wild beast who cannot get near enough to hurt us."

XIII

After these general considerations upon the limits within which Cellini's veracity may be trusted, I pass to some particulars that have been always challenged in his statements.

Upon the very first pages of the book we are met with an astounding legend relating to the foundation and the name of Florence. Having shown familiarity with previous speculations on the subject, he re-

jects all other hypotheses in favour of a pure myth, by which the origin of the city is referred to an imaginary ancestor of his own, Fiorino da Cellino, a captain in the army of Julius Cæsar. It is needless to say that there is no ground whatever for the legend; and we can hardly believe that Cellini thought it would impose on any one's credulity. That it flattered his own vanity is certain; and I suspect from his way of introducing it that the story formed part of some domestic gossip regarding his ancestry which he had heard in boyhood. Many of the so-called Norman pedigrees of our aristocracy used to begin with fables hardly less ridiculous. To call this one of Cellini's lies would be as absurd as to deny that it confirms our belief in his childish self-conceit and uncritical habit of mind.

A more important piece of boasting is usually cast in his teeth. He tells us how he went, upon the 6th of May 1527, to the ramparts of Rome at the moment when the assault of the Imperial troops was being hotly pressed, and how he slew a captain with a well-directed musket-shot. This captain, as he afterwards learned, was the Constable of Bourbon. Now there is nothing to prove whether he did or did not shoot the Constable. He only mentions the fact himself on hearsay, and when he enumerated his past services before the judges who sent him to prison in 1538 he did not mention this feat.[1] That he wounded the Prince of Orange by the discharge of a culverin from the Castle of S. Angelo has never been disputed. Indeed, it is quite certain that he performed more than

[1] *Vita, lib. i. ch. ciii.*

yeoman's duty as a gunner all through the period of the sack of Rome. In consequence of his excellent soldiership, Orazio Baglioni offered him the captaincy of a band in the army he was collecting for the defence of Florence. Now Bourbon had been shot dead in the assault of Rome upon that foggy morning, and Cellini had certainly discharged his arquebuse from the ramparts. Always posing as a hero in his own eyes, he was gratified to obtain some colour for the supposition that one of his unerring balls had done the deed. If it were possible to put his thoughts about this event into a syllogism, it would run as follows: "Somebody shot Bourbon; I shot somebody; being what I am, I am inclined to think the somebody I shot was Bourbon."

Many of the odd things related by Cellini can be classified as things which really took place, like the accident of the scorpion and the tremendous hailstorm he encountered in the neighbourhood of Lyons. Others may be referred to common superstition. I will choose the instance of the salamander, which has often been brought up against him. Here he only informs us that his father gave him a good box on the ears, in order that he might not forget the occasion when he saw something in a wood-fire which his father took for a salamander.

Not a few of the most striking of his presumed lies turn out, upon inspection, like those of Herodotus, to be simply the best evidence of his veracity. That is to say, when we examine them we find that he had been recording actual phenomena with more than usual powers of observation, but without the power

of scientifically accounting for them. Being vividly conscious of the fact as he observed it, and at the same time subject to a wrong method of interpretation, he unconsciously proved his veracity by accurately describing what he saw, and then referring it to such causes as were current at his epoch. I will select two examples bearing on this point; both shall be recorded in his own words.

The first relates to a portent in the heavens, which he regarded as a sign sent for some fateful warning. After relating how he and his friend Felice had been shooting all day on the Roman Campagna, he proceeds as follows:[1] "We mounted and rode rapidly towards Rome; and when we reached a certain gently rising ground—night then had fallen—looking in the direction of Florence, both with one breath exclaimed in the utmost astonishment, 'Oh, God of heaven! what is that great thing one sees there over Florence?' It resembled a huge beam of fire, which sparkled and gave out extraordinary lustre. I said to Felice, 'Assuredly we shall hear to-morrow that something of vast importance has happened in Florence.'" In effect, they did hear that Alessandro de' Medici had been murdered by his cousin Lorenzino. Yet, meanwhile, Cellini has left a striking, though brief, picture of the aurora borealis which he happened to have noticed.

The second of these examples is more curious and far more confirmatory of his truth. After those half-delirious experiences in the dungeon of S. Angelo, when he saw visions and thought that angels mi-

[1] *Vita, lib. i. ch. lxxxix.*

nistered to his sick body, he fancied himself under God's special guidance. As a sign of this peculiar grace, he relates the following circumstance:[1] "Since that time till now an aureole of glory (marvellous to relate) has rested on my head. This is visible to every sort of men to whom I have chosen to point it out; but these have been very few. This halo can be observed above my shadow in the morning, from the rising of the sun for about two hours, and far better when the grass is drenched with dew. It is also visible at evening about sunset. I became aware of it in France, at Paris; for the air in those countries is so much freer from mist that one can see it there far better manifested than in Italy, mists being far more frequent among us. However, I am always able to see it, and to show it to others, but not so well as in the country I have mentioned." Critics have taken for granted that this is a mere piece of audacious mendacity meant to glorify himself, whereas it is really the record of a very accurate but misinterpreted observation. Any one who walks abroad in grassy places when the light is low, as at sunrise or at sunset, can satisfy himself that his shadow cast on dewy sward is surrounded with a rim of glory like a lunar rainbow. But if he goes with companions, he will not see their shadows encircled with the same light, because his own body is the point which focusses the diffused rays.[2] He,

[1] *Vita, lib. i. ch. cxxviii.*

[2] *On the appearance of this passage in the Fortnightly Review for January 1887, I received a communication from H. D. Pearsall, Esq., of 3 Cursitor Street, expressing some interest in my account of Cellini's aureole. He says: "I observed the phenomenon some years ago in India, and the attendant circumstances were such as*

therefore, might well imagine that the aureole is given to himself alone; and, in order to exhibit it, he must make his comrade take a place behind him, where the halo becomes at once visible to both. Long before I attended to the above passage in Cellini, I noticed this phenomenon, and pointed it out to friends, finding that some of them were too deficient in powers of observation to perceive it, while others at once recognised the singular and beautiful effect. What makes the example interesting for the light it casts on Cellini's habit of mind is that he starts by saying the aureole surrounds his head, and then very ingenuously proceeds to tell us that it only surrounds the shadow of his head at certain times and in certain places. Those times and places are just what the experience of one who has observed the same phenomena would lead him to expect. Again, he sets

*you mention. It is curious, as illustrating the want of observation of most people, that I have never yet met with any one but yourself who had observed it." In explanation of the aureole he adds: "It appeared to me that the cause was simply the reflection of the direct rays of the sun from the wet surface of the blades of grass. The reason why a spectator at one side cannot see it would, therefore, not be that the illuminated person's body focussed the diffused rays, but simply the direct consequence of the law of reflection of light (angle of incidence = angle of refraction), so that the reflected rays would reach the eye of the object, but not that of any person at a little distance to one side. The aureole never extended lower than my shoulder, evidently for the same reason." This explanation is so obviously superior to that suggested by my own vague and unscientific phrase in the text, that I am grateful for the permission to report it in Mr. Pearsall's own words. It is worth adding, perhaps, that when the object finds himself at a considerable distance from the reflecting surface of wet grass, as when, for instance, he is driving in a carriage above a grassy meadow, the aureole will extend somewhat lower than his shoulder. This I have observed.*

[*Since this note was first published, a friend has pointed out to me a passage in Thoreau's Walden, at the beginning of the article named Baber Farm, which shows that Thoreau had observed the phenomenon I have described, and, like me, had connected his observation with Cellini's Memoirs. This confirmatory evidence gives me pleasure, and I am glad to report it.—J. A. S.*]

up a false theory to explain why he could see it better in France than in Italy. It is not that there is more mist in the latter than the former country, but that low-lying humidity of atmosphere and heavy dews on deep grass are favourable to the production of the appearance, and these conditions may be met with more frequently in a country like France than in the provinces of Middle Italy. It was upon the Alpine meadows, where I am now writing, at the season of early autumn frosts, that I first noticed it; and I can predict with some confidence when it is pretty certain to be reproduced. In my opinion, the very hesitancies of Cellini in this test-passage are undesigned corroborations of his general veracity. A man who deliberately invents something to glorify himself and mystify the world does not go about his work in this fashion. He does not describe a natural phenomenon so exactly that all the limiting conditions, which he regarded as inexplicable imperfections in the grace conferred upon him, shall confirm the truth of his observation.

A similar line of reasoning might be adopted with regard to the extraordinary night-scene in the Coliseum. Cellini went thither, firmly believing in ghosts and fiends, in order to raise devils, with a necromancer. A bonfire was lighted and drugs were cast upon the coals, which rolled forth volumes of murky smoke. In the smoke legions of demons appeared. Imagination and the awe-inspiring influences of the place, even if we eliminate a possible magic-lantern among the conjuror's appurtenances, are enough to account for what Cellini saw. He was credulous, he was super-

stitious; he was readily exalted to the fever-point of delirium (as in the case of Charon, who obsessed him during his Roman illness, the visions of S. Angelo when his leg was broken, and the apparition of the gravedigger during his short fever on the night of casting Perseus); but there is nothing in his confidences to make us suppose that the phantasmagoria of the Coliseum was a deliberate invention.

XIV

The most convincing proofs of Cellini's trustworthiness are not, however, to be sought in these minor details. I find them far stronger and far more abundant in the vast picture-gallery of historical portraits which he has painted. Parini, while tracing the salient qualities of his autobiography, remarked: "He is peculiarly admirable in depicting to the life by a few salient touches the characters, passions, personal peculiarities, movements, and habits of the people with whom he came in contact."

Only one who has made himself for long years familiar with the history of Cellini's period can appreciate the extraordinary vividness and truth of Cellini's delineation. Without attempting to do more than record his recollection of what happened to himself in commerce with men of all sorts, he has dramatised the great folk of histories, chronicles, and diplomatic despatches exactly as our best authorities in their more colourless and cautious style present them to our fancy. He enjoyed the advantages of the alcove and the ante-chamber; and without abusing these in the spirit of a Voltaire or a valet, he has greatly

BUST OF COSIMO DE' MEDICI
( FLORENCE )

added to our conception of Clement VII., Paul III., Francis I., and Cosimo de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Clement driven to his wits' end for cash during the sack of Rome; Paul granting favours to a cardinal at the end of a copious repast, when wine was in his head; Francis interrupting the goldsmiths in their workshop at the Petit Nesle; Cosimo indulging in horse-play with his buffoon Bernardone —these detach themselves, as living personages, against the grey historic background. Yet the same great people, on more ceremonious occasions, or in the common transactions of life, talk, move, and act precisely as we learn to know them from the most approved documentary sources. Take, for example, the singular interview between Paul III. and the Marquis del Vasto, which Cellini interrupted, and when he was used by the former to exhaust the patience of the Spanish envoy.[1] Our authorities tell us much about the fox-like shifty nature of the Pope; and we know that, precisely at this moment, he was eager to preserve his own neutrality between the courts of France and Spain. Cellini, thinking only of his personal affairs, withdraws the curtain from a scene which we feel at once to be the very truth and inner life of history.

It was not only in dealing with the greatest actors on the world's stage that Cellini showed this keen fidelity to fact. His portraits of the bestial Pier Luigi Farnese, of the subtle and bizarre Lorenzino de' Medici, of the Ferrarese minister Giliolo, of the Florentine majordomo Ricci, of the proud Comte de

[1] *Vita, lib. i. ch. xcii.*

St. Paul, correspond exactly to what we learn otherwise about them, adding slight significant touches from private information. Madame D'Etampes and the Duchess Eleanora of Tuscany move across his pages as they lived, the one with the vivacity of a king's insolent mistress, the other with the somewhat sickly and yet kindly grandeur of the Spanish consort to an astute Italian prince. Lesser folk, with whom we are equally acquainted through their writings or biographical notices, appear in crowds upon a lower plane. Bembo, in his dignified retreat at Padua; Torrigiano, swaggering about the Florentine workshops; Giulio Romano, leading the debauched society of Roman artists; Maitre Roux, in his Parisian magnificence; Alamanni, the humane and gentle nobleman of letters; Sansovino, expanding at ease in Venetian comfort; old Michel Angelo, with his man Urbino, in their simple Roman dwelling; Bandinelli, blustering before the Duke of Florence in a wordy duel with Cellini, which Vasari also has reported—all these, and how many more besides, are portrayed with an evident reality, which corresponds in each particular to the man as he is otherwise revealed to us by independent evidence. Yet Cellini had no intention of describing such folk for our benefit. As they happened to cross his life, so he sketched them with sharp, pungent quill-strokes, always thinking more about his own affairs than their personality. Nothing inspires a firmer confidence in his accuracy as an observer and his veracity as a narrator than the undesigned corroboration given to his portraits by masses of external and less vivid testimony.

This forces me to accept as genuine many of those powerful and humorous descriptions of character which we cannot check. How true to life is the history of young Luigi Pulci, who came to grief in Rome, after wasting exceptional talents in disgraceful self-indulgence! That episode reads like a *pièce justificative* in illustration of Aretino's *Dialogo delle Corti*. The story too of the mad Castellan of S. Angelo, who thought he was a bat, deserves like credence. The ruffianly postmaster at Siena, shot dead by Cellini in a quarrel; the Milanese simpleton who entreated the surgeon, while sewing up a wound in his mouth, not to close the whole orifice out of spite; the incomparable dilettante at Ferrara, Alfonso de' Trotti, who made such a fool of himself about some old models from Cellini's vases; Tribolo, the quaking coward; Busbacca, the lying courier; Cellini's father, with his fixed idea about Benvenuto's flute-playing; Ascanio and his sweetheart hidden in the head of the great statue of Mars at Paris—hundreds of such rapidly traced silhouettes, with all the force of life and all the comicality of satiric genius, cross these pages and enliven them at every turn. We have faith in their veracity, partly because they correspond to human nature in the times which Cellini knew, and partly because his descriptions of character, when verified by external evidence, are found so faithful.

xv

The trustworthiness of Cellini's *Memoirs* might be submitted to yet another test. Numerous details, as, for instance, the episode of his brother's death and

what he says about Foiano's starvation in S. Angelo, are supported by Varchi's *History of Florence*. His own private memoranda and official petitions to the Duke of Florence confirm the main records of his life in that city. The French letters of naturalisation and the deed conferring on him the lordship of Le Petit Nesle are in existence. Signor Bertolotti's and the Marchese Campori's researches have established the accuracy of his narrative regarding his life in Rome and his relations to the Cardinal of Ferrara.[1] But it would occupy too much space to pursue this line of investigation with the scrupulous thoroughness, without which such arguments are unconvincing. Enough has perhaps been said in this place upon the topic of the man's veracity. What I have attempted to demonstrate is, that he did not mean to lie, and that we possess strong confirmatory testimony to the truth of his statements and the accuracy of his observation. This does not imply that a man of his violent passions and egregious vanity is always to be trusted, either when he praises his own performance or depreciates his sworn foes.

## XVI

A different class of problems have to be faced when we seek to estimate how far Cellini can be justly called either a rogue or a villain. I have admitted in my general review of his character that he was capable of suppressing portions of the truth respecting matters which involved his own ideal of a manly

[1] *Benvenuto Cellini a Roma, &c. Arch. Stor. di Roma*, 1875. *Notizie inedite delle relazioni tra il Cardinale Ipp. d'Este e B. C., Modena*, 1862.

reputation; although I am inclined to trust his narrative on all points openly related.

Now there are two important passages in his life which might be challenged as imperfectly explained by him, and which are therefore *ex hypothesi* suspicious. The first of these is the long imprisonment in S. Angelo at Rome; the second is his final departure from France.

The account which Cellini gives of the former episode is that he had been calumniated to Pope Paul III., and had furthermore incurred the hatred of Pier Luigi Farnese.[1] At the same time he states that his first examination before judges turned upon a charge of having stolen crown jewels amounting to eighty thousand ducats, while employed to melt their settings down for Clement VII.[2] It seems that a Perugian workman in Cellini's employ informed against him; and Pier Luigi obtained from his Papal father a grant of this value when it should be recovered. Cellini successfully disposed of the accusation by appealing to the books of the Apostolic Camera, upon which all the articles belonging to the regalia were duly inscribed. He also asked what he could have done with so large a sum as eighty thousand ducats.[3] Upon this point it is worth noticing that when Cellini made his nuncupatory will some months previous to this imprisonment, he possessed nothing at all approaching to the amount of eighty thousand ducats.[4] Also, he relates how he confessed, during the lifetime of Pope Clement, to having kept back

[1] *Lib. i. chaps. lxxv., xcii.*
[2] *Ibid., chap. ci.*
[3] *Ibid., chap. ciii.*
[4] *Ibid., chap. lxxxiv.*

a small quantity of gold-filings in the Castle of S. Angelo, for which act he received plenary Papal absolution.[1] It seems therefore certain that Cellini cleared himself before the judges of this charge of peculation; and nothing more was subsequently said about it.

Yet there remains some difficulty in understanding why he was kept so long in prison after the voracious Pier Luigi found that no articles of value could be extracted from him. Are we to believe that Paul III. remained obdurate in his resentment merely because some courtiers told him that Cellini had been laughing at the Pope behind his back? That is by no means either impossible or improbable, knowing as we do what acts of tyranny a Pope was capable of perpetrating. Varchi, for example, writing his *History of Florence* under Medicean influence for a Medicean Grand Duke, relates how the last great Medicean Pope, Clement VII., caused a political antagonist, Fra Foiano, to be starved in the Castle of S. Angelo by daily reducing his rations till the wretch expired of vermin and famine. Now Alessandro Farnese, Pope Paul III., was in some ways worse and more dangerous than any of those previous Pontiffs. He owed his first advancement to his sister's shame; for Giulia la Beila had been the mistress of Pope Alexander VI. During his early manhood he underwent imprisonment in the Castle of S. Angelo for forgery while holding public offices of trust. He was, in fact, a survivor from the most worldly and most lawless days of the Roman Church.

[1] *Lib. i. chap. xliii.*

But when he obtained the tiara public opinion had begun to undergo a change. Paul III. could not play the part of a Della Rovere or Borgia openly before the world. His hands, in the new age dawning over Europe, were tied; the natural movements of his youthful years were checked; the quality he chiefly cultivated was craft. That did not, however, prevent him from being stiff-necked and tyrannical when he could indulge his humour. His bastard, Pier Luigi, Duke of Parma, who was eventually murdered by his outraged subjects, is acknowledged to have been a low rascal of infamous habits. A pair of such people were quite capable of keeping Cellini in prison out of spite and obstinacy. Moreover, we have already learned from Caro's correspondence that well-informed persons in Rome ascribed his prolonged detention to the incorrigible violence of his language rather than to any past offences.

With regard to Cellini's final removal from France, a good deal might be said. He informs us that domestic circumstances obliged him to revisit his native town of Florence. His only sister was married to an aged husband with failing health, who earned nothing for the family. This couple had six daughters, and Cellini not unreasonably feared that the girls might fall into bad ways unless they were provided for.[1] With characteristic recklessness he left the land of his adoption before he had properly squared accounts with King Francis. On the journey from Paris to Lyons something happened which might raise suspicion. Messengers followed our art-

[1] *Lib. ii. chap. l.*

ist, and obliged him to give up three pieces of silver plate and some bullion on the King's account. Cellini asserts that he intended to deposit these valuables at Lyons in an abbey of his old patron the Cardinal of Ferrara, before he left the country. He argues with much show of reason that it would have been impossible to convey a whole mule-load of precious metal out of France under the then strict laws regarding exportation. There were further circumstances connected with the King's health at that period which made him unwilling to abandon so much property in Paris under the charge of two Italian workmen. Francis, in the year 1545, was already sinking into premature decrepitude, and his life could not be reckoned on. Cellini's story is therefore plausible and intelligible enough. We know, besides, that he subsequently lost all the effects which he left behind at Paris; nor have we any reason to doubt that Francis was satisfied with the lengthy statement which he transmitted from Florence.[1] Yet the narrative of his departure has exposed him to a charge of peculation or of seriously involved accounts in his transactions with the King. I am not aware that sinister light has been thrown upon this matter from French archives. On the contrary, we know that Francis, who sincerely liked him, wanted Cellini to return. What is more, we possess a letter written by Duke Cosimo to Caterina de' Medici in 1547, the year of her husband's accession to the French throne, recommending Benvenuto to his royal cousin, and expressly setting forth

[1] *See Plon, Benvenuto Cellini, p.* 67.

the reasons why the artist had left Paris.[1] "He came back to this country," says the Grand Duke, "in order that his nieces might benefit by his talents and assistance; and I am no less pleased by this mark of dutiful regard for his family than by the beauty of his works." For some reason or another, Cellini does not appear to have used this letter. Still, twelve years afterwards, the Queen of France again required his services. Henri II. died in 1559, and in 1562 his widow had not yet erected her husband's monument. At the latter date her envoy to Florence, Baccio del Bene, invited Cellini to complete the work, which had been begun by Daniele da Volterra.[2] Whether he did not care to go, being old and having recently married, or whether, as he says, the Duke refused him leave, cannot be decided. It is only certain that he never returned to France.

These two episodes are, it seems to me, the two most dubious passages in Cellini's life—those, I mean, upon which a charge of roguery might most plausibly be founded. In the matter of the Pope's jewels he stands acquitted; but scrupulous critics may still perhaps trace a mystery in the circumstances which attended his quitting the service of King Francis. It is hardly necessary here to refer to a sentence passed on him in 1548 for selling garnets under the pretence that they were rubies.[3] The facts are not sufficiently established.

[1] *Bianchi, p.* 588. [2] *Lib. ii. chap. cxii.*

[3] *See Mabellini, 'Delle Rime di B. C., p.* 104, *and Montazio, I prigionieri del Mastio di Volterra, p.* 200, *note.*

XVII

After roguery we come now to the question of villainy and violence. When Benvenuto was first captured by the Roman authorities, they tried, as I have already shown, to convict him on a charge of stealing court jewels. In the course of his interrogation, "that catchpoll of a governor" said to him: "And yet you have murdered several men!"[1] This had nothing to do with the prisoner's accusation; but it had, perhaps, something to do with the attitude of his judges; and so, I imagine, has it a great deal to do with the opinion people of the present day will form of him. It is certain that Cellini himself was not wholly indifferent to his homicides; for when he thought his throat was going to be cut in Torre di Nona, the memory of them weighed upon his conscience.[2] At that moment he had assassinated two men in Rome upon the open streets, namely, the constable who caused his brother's death, and a goldsmith called Pompeo. He had thrice risked the commission of wholesale slaughter, once in Florence, once in Rome, and thirdly at Ferrara; but these quarrels resulted in no bloodshed. It does not appear that he had killed anybody else, although he severely wounded a man named Ser Benedetto in a sudden fit of rage.[3]

So far, then, according to his own admission, Cellini had only two clear murders on his mind in 1538. Possibly he forgot a few of less importance, for his memory was not always trustworthy about

[1] *Lib. i. chap. ciii.* [2] *Ibid., chap. cxv.* [3] *Ibid., chap. lxvi.*

trifles. For instance, when he baptized an illegitimate daughter at Paris in 1543, he calmly remarked: "This was the first child I ever had, so far as I remember."[1] Afterwards, he made up to some extent for any previous omissions; for he informs us with circumstantial details how he killed the postmaster at Siena, and how he disabled two of his enemies at Paris, carving them about the legs and arms with his sword, in order to avoid a homicide and display his skill at fence.[2]

Bloodshed, accordingly, played a prominent part in Benvenuto's life experiences; and those who are best acquainted with him know that it was hardly his fault if this feature is not more prominent in their records. Paolo Micceri and Baccio Bandinelli, for example, owed their narrow escape from assassination less to his forbearance than to their own want of pluck.[3] At this point, then, it is necessary to advance some arguments in his defence. In the first place, it will be noticed that he speaks with pride and imperturbability about these murderous exploits. Whatever ceremony of phrase he used in describing his departure from Paris, there is nothing of this sort when he comes to relate the details of a homicide. All is candid and above board upon these occasions, except when he exhibits a slight sense of shame at being obliged to waylay his brother's slayer.[4] The causes of this good conscience are not far to seek. I have already stated that murder at that epoch passed for a merely venial error. It

[1] *Lib. ii. chap. xxxvii.*
[2] *Ibid., chaps. iv., xxviii.*
[3] *Ibid., chaps. xxxiii., lxvi.*
[4] *Lib. i. chap. li.*

was then esteemed the duty of a vigorous human being to assert his honour by taking the lives of men who had insulted or wronged him in his own judgment, or the lives of sisters and wives who had disgraced his family. The universal records of the age support this statement; and long after Cellini's death theological casuists defended homicide on both these counts, arguing that honour was a man's life, and that an assault upon his honour was equivalent to an assault with violence upon his person. They justified murder when the member of a religious order vindicated its reputation. They justified infanticide when a girl sought to defend her good repute. The casuists did but formulate social customs too prevalent to be suppressed, with the pious view of keeping men whom we call criminals within the pale of Holy Church. Small blame was it then to Cellini if he practised what the doctors preached! His acts of violence fell under what were then considered honourable categories. He speaks with satisfaction about them, because he plumed himself on their commission, and reckoned upon gaining credit with society. This curious self-complacency reaches its climax in some lines addressed to Bandinelli, who had cast Cellini's murders in his teeth. Cellini answered: "At any rate, the men I have killed do not shame me so much as your bad statues shame you; for the earth covers my victims, whereas yours are exposed to the view of the world." Little did he imagine how he would be arraigned, after the lapse of full three centuries, by English criticasters for what, at the very worst, he reckoned splendid crimes!

Meanwhile an enormous mass of historical evidence remains to cast explanatory light upon his singular illusion.[1]

It is harder to extenuate Cellini's action upon two occasions when he killed nobody, but indulged an infernal instinct of revenge. On the first of these occasions, an innkeeper somewhere near Chioggia crossed his humour about the proper way of paying the host's bill.[2] Having paid it overnight, our friend managed to slice the man's new beds up with his knife next morning, and decamped, after doing more than fifty crowns' worth of damage. The second is one I cannot here conveniently deal with. It involves the whole episode of Caterina and Paolo Micceri in Paris, over which biographers of Cellini would willingly draw a veil, and the details of which are such as to justify their reticence before the respectable English public.[3] The only defence which might be urged for Cellini at this point is the one which Dante used in self-exculpation after breaking faith with Fra Alberigo on that hideous glacier in the lowest pit of hell.[4] In other words, it is necessary to invoke the principle that rogues should be unmercifully paid out in their own coin of roguery. But this argument will hardly serve to excuse either Cellini's brutalities or Dante's malice.

XVIII

The revolting episode of Cellini's dealings with Caterina suggests another aspect of his character

[1] *See my Renaissance in Italy, vol. vi. chaps. v., vi.* [2] *Lib. i. chap. lxxix.*
[3] *Lib. ii. chaps. xxix.–xxxv.* [4] *Divina Commedia, Inferno, xxxiii.* 109–150.

which must be lightly touched on. Not even a professed apologist can deny that he was reckless in the indulgence of his sensual appetites. We have no evidence that he ever felt the gentler emotions of love for a woman. Perhaps his passion for Angelica comes nearest to a tender or romantic sentiment; but the grotesque ending of that adventure deprives it of all dignity. On the other hand, women of loose life play a large part in his *Memoirs;* and it is clear that he changed mistresses with indiscriminate facility. There is, moreover, reason to believe that he was not free from the darker lusts which deformed Florentine society in that epoch.[1] The loves to which he yielded were animal, licentious, almost brutal; determined to some extent by an artist's feeling for beauty, but controlled by no moral sense and elevated by no spiritual enthusiasm.

XIX

Passing now from the man to the writer and the artist, we have first to regard Cellini as the composer of one of the world's three or four best autobiographies, and next as the most eminent exponent of the later Italian Renaissance in craftsmanship of several kinds.

It would be superfluous to quote authorities upon the high esteem in which the *Memoirs* are held, both for their style and matter, by Italians. Baretti's em-

[1] *Of course he loudly protests his innocence. But his precipitate flight after the affair of Cencio (lib. ii. chap. lxi.) is suspicious. So is the language used by Bandinelli in his altercation with Cellini (ib., chap. lxx.). It must also be added that he was imprisoned in 1556 on a charge of unnatural vice. See Mabellini (Delle Rime di B.C., pp. 106, 129) on this point.*

phatic eulogy can hardly be called exaggerated: "The Life of Benvenuto Cellini, written by himself in the pure and unsophisticated idiom of the Florentine people, surpasses every book in our literature for the delight it affords the reader."

In truth, without multiplying passages of panegyric, I am confident that every one who may have curiously studied Italian history and letters will pronounce this book to be at one and the same time the most perfect extant monument of vernacular Tuscan prose, and also the most complete and lively source of information we possess regarding manners, customs, ways of feeling, and modes of acting in the sixteenth century. Those who have made themselves thoroughly familiar with Cellini's *Memoirs*, possess the substance of that many-sided epoch in the form of an epitome. It is the first book which a student of the Italian Renaissance should handle in order to obtain the right direction for his more minute researches. It is the last book to which he should return at the close of his exploratory voyages. At the commencement he will find it invaluable for placing him at the exactly proper point of view. At the end he will find it no less invaluable for testing and verifying the conclusions he has drawn from various sources and a wide circumference of learning. From the pages of this book the Genius of the Renaissance, incarnate in a single personality, leans forth and speaks to us. Nowhere else, to my mind, whether in the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel or on Palladian palace fronts, in Ariosto's cantos or in Machiavelli's dissertations, do we find

the full character of the epoch so authentically stamped. That is because this is no work of art or of reflection, but the plain utterance of a man who lived the whole life of his age, who felt its thirst for glory, who shared its adoration of the beautiful, who blent its paganism and its superstitions, who represented its two main aspects of exquisite sensibility to form and almost brutal ruffianism. We must not expect from Cellini the finest, highest, purest accents of the Renaissance. He does not, as an artist, transport us into the heavens of Michel Angelo and Tintoretto. He has nothing of Ariosto's golden melody or Tasso's romantic love-chant. He cannot wield Aretino's lash or Machiavelli's scalpel of analysis. But his *Memoirs* enable us to comprehend how those rarer products of the Italian genius at a certain point of evolution were related to the common stuff of human nature in the race at large. For students of that age he is at once more and less than his illustrious contemporaries; less, inasmuch as he distinguished himself by no stupendous intellectual qualities; more, inasmuch as he occupied a larger sphere than each of them singly. He touched the life of that epoch at more points than any person who has left a record of his doings. He was the first goldsmith of his time, an adequate sculptor, a restless traveller, an indefatigable workman, a Bohemian of the purest water, a turbulent bravo, a courtier and companion of princes; finally, a Florentine who used his native idiom with incomparable vivacity of style. These qualities combined in a single personality, strongly marked by specific characteristics, yet pe-

culiar to the sixteenth century in Italy, render him unique as a guide through the labyrinth of that brilliant but perplexing epoch.

## XX

The literary merits of Cellini's autobiography demand a passing notice. Notwithstanding the plebeian simplicity of his language, he has described some scenes with a dramatic vigour and a richness of colouring rarely to be found upon the pages of romance or history. Among these I would call attention to the Roman banquet, during which Diego, dressed magnificently like a woman, won the homage of assembled artists; to the conjuration in the Coliseum; Cecchino's deathbed; Benvenuto's vision of the sun while lying sick and hopeless in his dungeon; the phantom of Charon which haunted him throughout a lingering fever; the exhibition of his Jupiter in the great gallery of Fontainebleau; the Parisian law-court; and the long episode of his casting the bronze Perseus. His memory was so tenacious that he could present the incidents of bygone years, with all their circumstances, just as though his eye were on the object. Without conscious effort he communicates the atmosphere, the local colour, the specific feeling of each place he visited. Ferrara has a different note from Florence, Rome from Paris, in his narrative. Yet it is clear that he never took thought about word-painting. The literary result is not attained by external touches of description, but by the vigorous reproduction of a multitude of impressions made upon his eagerly observant nature.

This quality of vivid vision makes itself peculiarly felt in the narrative of his dangerous passage across the Lake of Wallenstadt.[1] Here every detail contributes to the presentation of a specifically Swiss landscape—the steep and cavernous cliffs of the Churfirsten, the dreary rain beating upon precipitous lawns and hanging fir-woods, the night-watchman in the town of Glarus, the sudden breaking of a glorious day upon the Lake of Zürich, and then the little city of Zürich itself—*città maravigliosa pulita quanto un gioiello.*

Having already touched upon his power of portrait-painting with the pen, I need not return to that topic.[2] It should, however, be remarked that his method of sketching men resembles his treatment of things and places. There is very little of description. The characters present themselves so vividly before our eyes because they were so clearly visible to Cellini's mind while writing, because he so firmly seized what was to him essential in their personalities, and so powerfully communicated the impression made upon his sensibilities by contact with them.

## XXI

Cellini's autobiography might also be studied from the side of humour. Many passages remind us of the Florentine Novelle, notably of the old tale entitled *Il Grasso Legnaiuolo*, and of Lasca's stories about Pilucca and his mischievous companions. Take, for example, the episode of his quarrel with Bernar-

[1] *Lib. i. chaps. xcv.–xcvii.* [2] *See above, pp. 26, 27.*

done, and the burlesque revenge with which he chastised that fellow's coarseness.[1] The same note of Florentine bizarrerie distinguishes the less agreeable incident in the tavern near Chioggia.[2] Again, how racy, how native to the soil, is that altercation between Cellini and the old hag in a deserted street of the plague-stricken city![3] While posing as a hero, he was able to see the humorous side of himself also. This is shown in the passage where he relates how his good-natured housekeeper bantered him.[4] But it is enough to have indicated these aspects of the *Memoirs*. The charm of the whole book very largely consists in a vivacity and elasticity of narrative style, which passes from grave to gay, from passion to mirth, from the serious occupations of the artist to the light amusements of the man of pleasure, without perceptible transitions, the author's own intense individuality pervading and connecting each successive mood.

XXII

After reviewing Cellini's autobiography, it should be mentioned that he appeared in his own lifetime as an author.[5] He published two treatises: one upon the goldsmith's art, describing its several processes in detail; another upon sculpture, with special reference to bronze-foundry. These dissertations are

[1] *Lib. ii. chap. lxxxix.*

[2] *Lib. i. chap. lxxix.*

[3] *Ibid., chap. xl.*

[4] *Lib. ii. chap. lxxvii.*

[5] *The prose works and collected poems may best be studied in Milanesi's edition (Florence, Le Monnier, 1857). Mabellini's little book, Delle Rime di B. C. (Roma, Paravia, 1885), deserves careful attention for its patient and subtle analysis of Cellini's verses.*

of the highest value for students of Renaissance craftsmanship, at a time when the experience of centuries had been condensed in the practice and principles of a first-rate master. They rank, moreover, as excellent specimens of sound Italian style applied to the purpose of technical exposition.[1] In the next place, we possess the fragments of a discourse on Architecture, and a short defence of Sculpture against Painting, from which numerous details regarding the artist's works and theories can be derived.

Cellini, like every Florentine of many-sided genius, was also ambitious of making his mark as a poet. Some specimens of his compositions will be found translated in the following pages; and a collection has recently been formed of his scattered verses.[2] As might be guessed, they are not the productions of a literary master; yet they confirm our opinion of his singularly keen and stringent personality. Having received no education in letters, Cellini never learned to write grammatically. His poetry suffers naturally more than his prose from awkward incoherences. He rhymed with difficulty; frequently tripped in rhythm and accent; and affected such far-fetched conceits and violent images that a large portion of his sonnets are unintelligible. Of these defects he was fully conscious, speaking with modest humour of his *boschereccia Musa*, or untutored rustic inspiration.

[1] *We have good reason to suppose that they were re-written by a man of letters before going to press. Signor Milanesi believes that Gherardo Spini performed this office for the author. See his Trattati, &c., Florence, Le Monnier, 1857, p. xvii.*

[2] *See Milanesi's edition of the Trattati, cited above.*

Cellini has, finally, to be estimated as an artist in the narrower sense of that word. While approaching this part of our subject, it is worth remembering that he showed in boyhood a strong predilection for the arts of design. His father longed to make him a musician; but though the lad became a skilful flute-player, he displayed the strongest aversion to this exercise of his talents. On the other hand, his love for drawing and his inborn mastery over technical processes of all kinds made themselves so manifest, that no doubt remained about his real vocation. Like nearly all the greatest Florentine artists before him, sculptors, painters, architects, and engravers, he was put at an early age to the goldsmith's trade. *Oreficeria*, as then understood, formed an epitome of all the plastic arts.[1] The young goldsmith did not merely learn how to work in precious metals and to set jewels. He was bound to become acquainted with the mysteries of brass-foundry, the methods of hammering iron, the secrets of chiselling steel for medals and casting dies. He had to make himself an expert draughtsman, to study anatomy, to model from the nude, and to acquire familiarity with antique masterpieces. Enamelling and niello formed special branches of his craft; nor could architecture be neglected, because

[1] *Of this relation of Oreficeria to the other arts Cellini himself was fully conscious. He writes as follows: "L' arte dell' orefice, per essere maggior arte di tutte." Trattati, p. 277.*

*He speaks of architecture, sculpture, and painting as "sorelle carnali" of oreficeria. Ibid., p. 6.*

he was often called upon to fashion tabernacles, and to execute large works in gold or silver which resembled buildings by their intricacy of design. During the course of this apprenticeship he gained further insight into numerous subordinate processes, such as modelling in wax or stucco, baking terra-cotta, preparing foils for gems. He studied the qualities of precious stones and pearls. He handled every instrument, from the hammer of the gold-beater and the chisel of the stone-cutter down to the engraver's burin and the palette of paste-mixers. He had to be as ready at the anvil or the furnace as at the more delicate operations of wire-drawing and filigree manipulation. From the workshop of a master-goldsmith the apprentice went forth able to select his own particular branch of industry. Meanwhile it must not be forgotten that, so long as he remained a goldsmith, he was forced to work in miniature. His many technical accomplishments were employed chiefly in producing articles of plate, jewellery, and costly furniture. This made him, while he continued in the trade, a servant of popular caprice and fashion, which varied with the change of seasons. Those world-famous masters who, like Ghirlandajo, Donatello, and Brunelleschi, won glory by their subsequent achievements in painting, sculpture, and architecture, devoted themselves to special studies in the higher arts soon after their prentice-days were over. This was not the case with Cellini. He continued to be a goldsmith in the strict sense of that term until he had completed his fortieth year. This fact has to be taken into account when we

criticise his serious efforts in statuary.

It does not appear that during his early manhood Cellini felt any inclination to abandon the craft which he had chosen in boyhood. Perhaps Nature had not gifted him with those imperative instincts which force some artists to become sculptors or painters. Perhaps the large admixture of the bravo and the pleasure-seeker in his character prevented him from applying to intellectual studies, and from using his technical acquirements as a stepping-stone toward nobler undertakings. It would indeed seem as though he was naturally formed to be a goldsmith, but that ambition led him at an advanced period of life to rival men who had already made their mark in sculpture. At any rate, he exercised his eminent artistic faculties through more than half his lifetime in the humbler trade, earning much money by his undisputed excellence, spending it freely, and forming no plans for the future. In this way he became an adept in all the technicalities of plastic art; but the heart and soul and vigour of the man found vent through other channels. In 1527, for instance, we know that he was upon the point of throwing up his profession and accepting a captaincy under Orazio Baglioni. The bravo and the soldier kept disputing with the artist in his nature. Meanwhile he never relaxed his efforts to become the most expert and inventive goldsmith of his time. The defects which are apparent in his more ambitious works, and which I shall have to point out shortly, may be ascribed to this composite temper and to this prolonged contentment with a subordinate branch

of industry. He had the qualities of a consummate craftsman, not those of an imaginative artist, who is led irresistibly to dedicate his life with all its energies to the ideal.

XXIV

Few of Benvenuto's masterpieces in jewellery and goldsmith's work survive.[1] Artists who aspire to immortality should shun the precious metals. The same fate has probably befallen Cellini's handiwork as befell the jewels he took to pieces in the Castle of S. Angelo. Critics have blamed his callousness on that occasion; but he knew well that it is of no use to waste a sigh over things in their nature so ephemeral as gold and silver settings. Still, some authentic pieces of his workmanship may be inspected in the collections of Florence, Vienna, Paris, Munich, and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Perhaps the most interesting are the golden salt-cellar at Vienna and the medallions of Clement VII. and Alessandro de' Medici, since these are minutely described for us in his *Memoirs*.

In technical excellence, as regards all processes of handling, chasing, and engraving, setting and mounting precious stones, enamelling metals, and adapting ingenious designs with bold invention to the special purpose of the object, these rare remnants of Cellini's art defy competition. It must, however, be admitted that, even while working on a small scale, he displayed more manual dexterity and more orna-

[1] *The exhaustive work of M. Eugène Plon, Benvenuto Cellini, Orfèvre, Médailleur, Sculpteur, Paris, 1883, contains a complete catalogue of authentic and doubtful pieces.*

SALT-CELLAR BY CELLINI
(VIENNA)

mental luxuriance than any of the higher intellectual gifts. The man, as he stands revealed in his autobiography, was lacking in reserve, in delicacy, in fineness of emotion, in what the Germans call *Innigkeit*, in elevation of soul and imaginative purity. The very qualities which render his life-history dramatic prove the externality of his nature, the violence and almost coarseness of his temperament, the absence of poetry, reflection, reverie, and spiritual atmosphere in his whole being. We are not, therefore, surprised to find that his artistic work, in spite of its prodigious skill, fecundity of invention, energy, and thoroughness of execution, is deficient in depth, deficient in sweetness, deficient in true dignity and harmony, deficient in those suggestive beauties which inspire a dream and waken sympathy in the beholder.

Shortcomings of this kind in the moral and intellectual elements of art were not peculiar to Cellini. They mark nearly the whole productions of his epoch. Only at Venice did the really grand style survive in the painting of Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto. Michel Angelo indeed was yet alive in 1543, the year when Benvenuto essayed works on a large scale in sculpture; but Michel Angelo's greatest achievements belonged to the past. Giulio Romano retained something of the sacred fire which animated his master Raphael's pictures. His vigorous but coarse and soulless frescoes may be properly compared with Cellini's statuary. Meanwhile, the marbles of Bandinelli and Ammanati, the manneristic productions of Montelupo and Montorsoli, the slo-

venly performances of Vasari, the cold and vacuous paintings of Bronzino, reveal even a lower spiritual vitality. The lamp of plastic art had burned low in Italy.

XXV

When Cellini left the sphere of jewellery and goldsmith's work, that emptiness of emotional and moral intention on which I have been dwelling became even more apparent. It was during his second visit to France, in the year 1543, that he aspired to be a sculptor in the strict sense of the word. At Paris he began to cast statues on a large scale in bronze, and to design colossal works combining statuary and architecture. Of the clay models for the fountain at Fontainebleau, with its gigantic Mars, so minutely described in his autobiography, nothing, so far as I am aware, is now extant. But we still possess the Nymph, which was transferred from Fontainebleau by Henry II. to Diane de Poitier's country-seat at Anet, and thence removed to the galleries of the Louvre, where it may now be seen. The defects of this recumbent figure are obvious. Though it might pass muster on a candlestick, the model, expanded to something over life-size, reveals a fatal want of meaning. The vacant features, the defective physical structure, and the inert pose of this nude woman are not compensated by the success of Benvenuto's casting, which is indeed remarkable. All the bad points of the later Florentine school appear here—a preposterous elongation of the body, an affected attenuation of the joints and extremities, and a complete absence of expression.

XXVI

It was not perhaps Cellini's fault that, having worked till past forty as a goldsmith, he should fail to produce an ideal statue at the first attempt. We ought rather to note with admiration his industry in the pursuit of this new aim, and the progress he afterwards made under great difficulties at Florence. His sojourn at Paris in the service of King Francis somewhat spoiled him as a man, but powerfully stimulated his energies as an artist. After his return to Italy, he was always more or less discontented with his lot; but he never ceased to be ambitious. From that last period of his active life (1545–1559) five eminent specimens of sculptor's work remain. One of these is the large bronze bust of Duke Cosimo, now to be seen in the Palazzo del Bargello at Florence. It is an unsympathetic and heavy piece of portraiture, but true to the character of the model. A second is the bust of Bindo Altoviti in the Palazzo Altoviti at Rome. Another is the antique statue in the Uffizzi, restored by Benvenuto for a Ganymede. He had to supply the head, arms, and part of the legs of this fragment. The marble, so far as I remember, is well wrought, but the motive of the restored figure shows a misconception of classical art. The boy's head, to begin with, is like some wax block in a barber's window—expressionless, simpering, and crisply curled. Then, instead of lifting the cup for Jove to drink from, this Florentine Ganymede teases a fawning eagle at his side by holding up a goldfinch for the royal bird to peck at. Before

speaking of the Perseus, which is Cellini's masterpiece, I must allude to his Crucifix in white marble. This he esteemed one of his best productions, and we have abundant evidence to prove that folk in Florence were of his opinion. It still exists in the Escorial, whither the Grand Duke sent it as a present to Philip II. of Spain. Not having seen the Crucifix, I can pass no judgment on its artistic quality or value as a piece of Christian sculpture.[1]

XXVII

Cellini's most substantial title to fame rests, and must always rest, upon his Perseus, that dramatic bronze so superbly placed upon its pedestal in the Loggia de' Lanzi, fronting the great piazza of Florence. Until quite recently this statue stood in close proximity to Michel Angelo's David. It still challenges comparison with Donatello's Judith, the Hercules and Cacus of Bandinelli, Ammanati's Neptune, and Gian Bologna's Rape of the Sabines. Surrounded by these earlier and contemporary performances of the Florentine school, the Perseus holds its own with honour. It lacks, indeed, the severe pregnancy and sombre reserve of Donatello's style. It misses the athletic simplicity and massive strength of Michel Angelo's hero. But it has something of fascination, a *bravura* brilliancy, a sharpness of technical precision, a singular and striking picturesqueness, which the works of those elder masters want. Far above Gian Bologna's academical

[1] *The fine engraving of this crucifix in Plon's book (planche xx.) suggests that Cellini aimed at a realistic representation of physical exhaustion.*

group of two naked men and a naked woman, above the blatant incapacity of Bandinelli and the dull pomposity of Ammanati, the Perseus soars into a region of authentic, if not pure or sublime, inspiration. No one who has seen it once will forget that ornate figure of the demigod, triumphant in his stately pose above the twisted corpse of the decapitated Gorgon.

Much might be urged in depreciation of Cellini's Perseus. Contrary to the traditions of later Florentine design, the hero's body is too thick, his limbs too coarse, and his head too large for statuesque dignity. Why this should be so tempts our curiosity; for the small wax model made by Cellini, and now preserved among several precious relics of like sort in the Palazzo del Bargello, exhibits the same figure with longer and slimmer proportions. There the Perseus stands as light and airy as Gian Bologna's Mercury, without any loss of his superhuman vigour. I have sometimes indulged the conjecture that Benvenuto deliberately shortened and thickened his statue with the view of working it in bronze. We know that he was anxiously preoccupied with the problem of casting the whole figure in such wise that the liquid metal should fill all parts of the mould, from the upraised head of Medusa to the talaria and feet of Perseus, at one jet. He succeeded in this *tour de force* of technical dexterity. But possibly he sacrificed the grace and elevation of his own conception to the ambition of the craftsman. Be this as it may, the first defect to notice in the Perseus is this of physical vulgarity. Then the face

is comparatively vacant of expression, though less so than with many of the master's works. Next, the helmet is surcharged with ornament, and the torso displays many meaningless muscular details. But after these criticisms have been made, the group—that is, the conquering hero and the prostrate Gorgon—remains one of the most attractive products of modern statuary. We discern in it the last spark of genuine Italian Renaissance inspiration.[1] It is still instinct with the fire and bizarre force of Florentine genius.

The pedestal has been, not altogether unjustly, blamed for being too small for the statue it supports. In proportion to the mass of bronze above it, this elaborately decorated base is slight and overloaded with superfluous details. Yet I do not feel sure that Cellini might not have pleaded something in self-defence against our criticism. No one thinks of the pedestal when he has once caught sight of Perseus. It raises the demigod in air; and that suffices for the sculptor's purpose. Afterwards, when our minds are satiated with the singular conception so intensely realised by the enduring art of bronze, we turn in leisure moments to the base on which the statue rests. Our fancy plays among those masks and cornucopias, those goats and female Satyrs, those little snuff-box deities, and the wayward bas-relief beneath them. There is much to amuse, if not to instruct or inspire us there.

[1] *The works of Jean Boullogne of Douai, commonly called Gian Bologna, which are somewhat later in date than Cellini's, ought perhaps to have been mentioned as exceptions in the sentence above.*

Although the Perseus may not be a great work of plastic design, worthy of sculpture in its best periods, it can never cease to be the most characteristic product of the vehement, ambitious artist's soul which throbbed in the writer of Cellini's *Memoirs*. It remains the final effort of Florentine genius upon the wane, striking a last blow for the ideals, mistaken, perchance, but manfully pursued, which Florence followed through the several stages of the Renaissance.

XXVIII

Cellini's autobiography circulated in MS. and was frequently copied before its first committal to the press in 1730. The result is that the extant MSS. differ considerably in their readings, and that the editions, of which I am acquainted with six, namely, those of Cocchi, Carpani, Tassi, Molini, Bianchi, and Camerini, have by no means equal value.[1] The

[1] 1. *Antonio Cocchi's edition was printed at Naples in* 1730, *with the date Colonia.* 2. *Gio. Palamede Carpani's was printed in three volumes at Milan, Soc. Tip. de' Classici Italiani, in* 1806. 3. *Francesco Tassi's appeared at Florence, Guglielmo Piatti, in three volumes,* 1829. 4. *Giuseppe Molini's appeared at Florence, Tipogr. all' insegna di Dante, in two volumes,* 1832. *This edition had been preceded by a duodecimo text published by Molini on the* 30*th of December* 1830, *simultaneously with Tassi's above mentioned. When Molini compared Tassi's text with the Laurentian MS., he saw that there was room for a third edition (that of* 1832), *more exact than either.* 5. *B. Bianchi's appeared at Florence, Le Monnier,* 1 *vol.,* 1852. 6. *That of Eugenio Camerini, Milan, Sonzogno,* 1886, *is a popular reprint, with an introduction and some additional notes. The text which I have principally used is Bianchi's. I may here take occasion to explain that the notes appended to my translation have to a large extent been condensed from the annotations of Carpani's, Tassi's, and Molini's editions, with some additional information derived from Bianchi, Camerini, and the valuable French work of Plon (B. C., Orfèvre, Médailleur, Sculpteur, Paris,* 1883). *A considerable number of notes have been supplied by myself, partly upon details respecting the Italian text, and partly upon points connected with history and technical artistic processes. It does not seem necessary*

one to be generally recommended is that of Signor B. Bianchi, founded upon the preceding edition of Molini. Tassi and Molini,[1] I must state, were the first editors to avail themselves of the original or parent codex, while Bianchi compared Molini's printed text throughout with the autograph. This authoritative MS. belongs to the Laurentian collection in Florence. It was written for the most part by Michele di Goro Vestri, the youth whom Cellini employed as his amanuensis; in some parts also by himself, and again by a second amanuensis. Perhaps we owe its abrupt and infelicitous conclusion to the fact that Benvenuto disliked the trouble of writing with his own hand. From notes upon the codex, it appears that this was the MS. submitted to Benedetto Varchi in 1559. It once belonged to Andrea, the son of Lorenzo Cavalcanti. His son, Lorenzo Cavalcanti, gave it to the poet Redi, who used it as a *testo di lingua* for the Della Cruscan vocabulary. Subsequently it passed into the hands of the booksellers, and was bought by L. Poirot, who bequeathed it, on his death in 1825, to the Laurentian Library.[1]

The autobiography has been translated into German by Goethe, into French by Leopold Leclanché, and into English by Nugent and Roscoe. The German version, I need hardly say, is an excellent piece of pure and solid style; and, for the most part, I have found it reproduce the meaning of the ori-

*after this acknowledgment, to refer each item to the original sources which have been successively incorporated into a variorum commentary on the Memoirs, or to indicate the portion I can claim for my own researches.*

[1] *See Tassi, vol. i. pp. xix.–xxiv.; and Molini, vol. i. pp. vi.–ix., for the history of this MS.*

ginal with fidelity. The French, which appeared subsequently to a version of Vasari by the same translator, displays a more intimate familiarity with sixteenth-century Italian than Goethe's; but it is sometimes careless, especially toward the conclusion, showing that the writer did not always choose to follow Cellini in his redundancies of phrase. Of the English version which bears the name of Thomas Roscoe, son to the distinguished author of the *Lives of Lorenzo de' Medici* and *Leo X.*, I am unable to speak very highly. It has the merit of a sound old-fashioned style, but it is grossly inaccurate; the unintentional misunderstandings of the text are innumerable, and the translator has felt himself at liberty to omit or to misrepresent whole passages which he deemed unfit for ears and eyes polite. Since my excuse for offering a new translation to the English public rests upon the deficiencies of Roscoe, I must be permitted to point out a few of his errors in this place.

To begin with, although Mr. Roscoe in his preface declares that he has adhered closely to the original text published by Molini, he deals unscrupulously with some important passages. For example, he blurs the incident of Faustina and her waiting-maid recorded in book i. chapter xxix. He suppresses the episode of Paolo Micceri and Caterina in book ii. chapters xxx., xxxiii.–xxxv. He confuses the story of Cencio and La Gambetta in book ii. chapter lxi. It is true that he might defend his action on the score that these passages are unedifying and offensive; but he ought to have indicated the nature and ex-

tent of his modifications and omissions. Personally, I am of opinion that if a book is worth translating, it ought to be set forth at full. Upon this principle I have made my own version, feeling that it is not right to defraud English readers of any insight into the conditions of society in the sixteenth century, or of any insight into the character of Cellini himself, which these *Memoirs* may afford. Here, however, there is room for various judgments; and some critics may maintain that Roscoe chose the more expedient method.

Upon the point of accuracy, on the other hand, all competent judges will be agreed. I therefore proceed to select a few test-passages which will show how little Roscoe's translation is to be relied upon. In each case I will first copy the Italian, next add a literal version, and finally give Roscoe's words:

I

Questo cartone fu la prima bella opera che Michel Agnolo mostrò delle maravigliose sue virtù, e lo fece a gara con un altro che lo faceva. (Bianchi, p. 22.)

This cartoon was the first fine work of art which Michel Agnolo displayed in proof of his marvellous talents, and he made it in competition with another draughtsman (*i.e.*, Lionardo da Vinci).

This cartoon was the first in which Michel Agnolo displayed his extraordinary abilities; *as he made this and another*, which were to adorn the hall. (Roscoe, p. 21.)[1]

[1] *I quote from Bohn's edition, London, 1850. The italics are mine.*

II

Perchè vedevo continuamente i fatti del divino Michel Agnolo . . . e da quella mai mi sono ispiccato. (Bianchi, p. 23.)

Because I had perpetually before my eyes the works of the divine Michel Agnolo . . . and from it I have never swerved.

Because *I had seen* the works of the divine Michel Agnolo . . . and never once *lost sight* of it. (Roscoe, p. 23.)

III

Così ci legammo i grembiuli indietro. (Bianchi, p. 25.)

So we tied our aprons behind our backs.

So we *buckled on our knapsacks*. (Roscoe, p. 25.)

IV

Mi pregò, che io facessi di sorte che lui l' avessi a' sua di. (Bianchi, p. 101.)

He begged me so to work that he should have it during his lifetime.

Requested me to *endeavour to please him by my execution*.

V

Me ne andai dalli destri del mastio. (Bianchi, p. 239.)

I went toward the latrines of the fortress.

I went and *got out upon the right side* of the tower. (Roscoe, p. 248.)

VI

Perchè io ho considerato che in quella vostra forma è entrato più roba che 'l suo dovere. (Bianchi, p. 322.)

For I have reflected that more metal entered that mould of yours than it could properly hold.

For I have taken into consideration that *there has been a greater consumption of metal upon this work than should have been.* (Roscoe, p. 323.)

VII

Se io avessi veduto mettervi nella forma l' anima, con una sola parola io v' arei insegnato che la figura sarebbe venuta benissimo. (Bianchi, p. 323.)

If I had seen you placing your block inside the mould, I could with one word have taught you how the figure would have come out to perfection.

If I had but instructed you with a single word, the figure would have come out admirably. (Roscoe, p. 323.)

VIII

Mandato a l' Elba. (Bianchi, p. 421.)

Sent to the island of Elba.

Sent to *the Elbe.* (Roscoe, p. 413.)

IX

La qual cosa non credette mai nessuno di questi pratici di quella arte. (Bianchi, p. 421.)

Which none of the masters versed in that art believed to be possible.

*And do not imagine that every common artist could have done as much.* (Roscoe, p. 413.)

X

E' bisognava fare molto maggiore la fornace, dove

io arei potuto fare un rame di gitto, grosso quanto io ho la gamba, e con quella gravezza di metallo caldo per forza ve l' arei fatto andare; dove il mio ramo che va insino a' piedi quella sei braccia che io dico, non è grosso più che dua dita. Imperò e' non portava 'l pregio. (Bianchi, p. 423.)

I must have made the furnace much larger, in which case I might have constructed a conduit as thick as my leg, and so by the weight of the molten metal I could have forced it down; whereas, my pipe, which runs the six cubits I have stated to the statue's feet, is not thicker than two inches. However, it was not worth the trouble and expense.

I must then have made the furnace much bigger, *to be able to cast a piece of brass as thick as my leg*, and with that weight of hot metal I should have made it *come out* by force; whereas, *my brass*, which goes down to the feet six cubits, as I mentioned before, is not above two inches thick. *Therefore it was not worth your notice.* (Roscoe, p. 415.)

XI

Io feci una manica. (Bianchi, p. 424.)

I made a funnel-shaped furnace.

I made a *sort of fence*. (Roscoe, p. 416.)

XII

Dare nelle spine. (Bianchi, p. 426.)

Drive in the plugs.

*Pour out the hot metal.* (Roscoe, p. 417.)

XIII

Il principe e Don Giovanni.' (Bianchi, p. 450.)

The Prince (or Duke's eldest son) and Don Giovanni.

The *princes*, *Don Giovanni*, &c. (Roscoe, p. 437.)

XIV

E diceva male di questo popolo. (Bianchi, p. 455.)

And he spoke abusively of that people of Florence.

And *all the ill that was said of him* by the populace. (Roscoe, p. 441.)

XV

Io ne feci un poco di mal giudizio, ma io non immaginavo nulla di quello che mi avvenne. (Bianchi, p. 481.)

I drew a somewhat bad conclusion from his hint; but I did not in the least picture to myself what was going to happen to me.

*I was guilty of an error in judgment, but was not at all mistaken in what happened to me.* (Roscoe, p. 467.)

XVI

A voi e' danno tutte le stoviglie. (Bianchi, p. 483.)

To you they give all the crockery.

They give you *napkins*. (Roscoe, p. 469.)

XVII

Io sentendomi ardere il sesso. (Bianchi, p. 483.)

I, feeling my seat burn.

I felt my *brain* all on fire. (Roscoe, p. 469.)

xviii

Importava la maggior gabella; e che egli non mancherebbe. (Bianchi, p. 490.)

It (the lease) involved the highest tax, and that he would not fail of his word.

*The farm would produce more, and could not possibly fail.* (Roscoe, p. 475.)

I have selected these few instances at random, when I might have culled the like by handfuls. But I may furthermore add that Roscoe is hardly less negligent in translating the Italian of Cellini's commentators. Thus we read on page 265 this version of a note by Carpani: "He was under apprehension of *being flayed alive.*" Carpani wrote *scannato*, which means *having his throat cut.*[1] It remains in the last place to be remarked that Roscoe is not excused by having followed bad readings of the original or incomplete authorities. His translation (dated, in its second edition, January 1, 1847) appeared after the labours of Carpani, Tassi, and Molini, and professes on the title-page to be "collated with the new text of Giuseppe Molini."

I have now shown reason why a new translation of Cellini's autobiography in our language is not a superfluity. At the same time, after severely criticising my predecessor, I disclaim the pretension that my own version will be found impeccable. There are many passages which it is extremely hard for an Italian even, versed in the old dialect of Tuscany, to

[1] *Carpani, vol. i. p. 423.*

understand.[1] This is due in a great measure to Cellini's colloquial style, and to the involved constructions occasioned by his impetuous flow of utterance in dictation, but also to his habitual use of familiar terms regarding life and art, the exact significance of which can now be hardly reproduced. Furthermore, I may add that it is no easy matter to avoid slips while working through so long a narrative in prose, and aiming at a certain uniformity of diction.

The truth is, that to translate Cellini's *Memoirs* taxes all the resources of the English language. It is, in the first place, well-nigh impossible to match that vast vocabulary of vulgar phrases and technical terminology. Some of Cellini's most vivid illustrations owe their pungency and special colouring to customs which have long passed out of current usage. Many of his most energetic epigrams depend for their effect upon a spontaneous employment of contemporary Florentine slang. Not a few of his most striking descriptions lose their value without the precise equivalents for works of art or handicraft or armoury now obsolete. In the next place, his long-winded and ungrammatical periods, his suspended participles, his vehemently ill-conjugated verbs, his garrulous anacolutha and passionate aposiopeses, his ingenious recourse to repeated pronouns and reiterated adverbs for sustaining a tottering sentence, his conversational resumption of the same connective phrases, his breathless and fiery incoherence following short incisive clauses of a glittering and trenchant edge, all these peculiarities, dependent on the man's command of his vernacu-

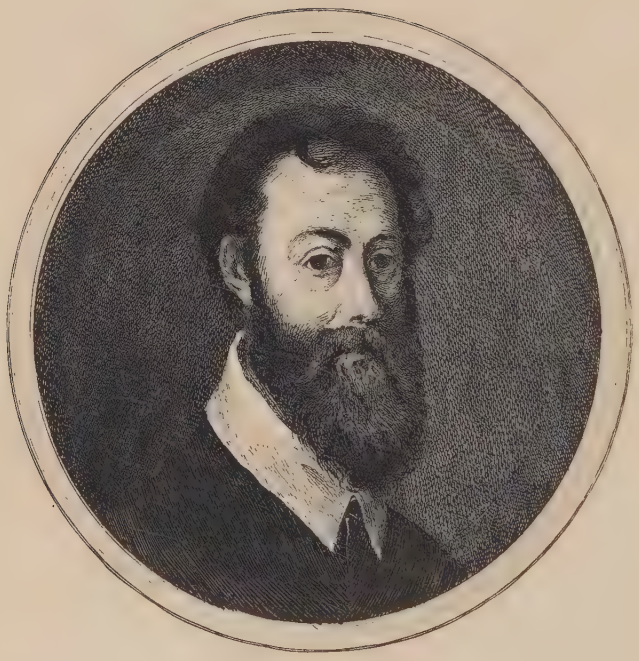
[1] *See Molini's preface to his edition, vol. i. p. x.*

lar and his untutored talent for expression, offer stumbling-blocks at every turn to the translator who wishes to preserve something of the tone of the original while presenting a continuous discourse to modern readers. The almost impossible task has to be attempted of reproducing the effect of heedless animated talking.

My own system has been to adopt a compromise between such literal rendering as might have made the English version not only unpalatable, but almost unintelligible, and such elaborate recasting of the original as would have preserved the sense at a regrettable sacrifice of character and vivacity. I may here notice that Cellini appears, at the commencement of his undertaking, to have been more tentative, more involved in diction, than he afterwards became; in fact, he only gradually formed his style. Therefore I have suffered the earlier sections of my version to retain a certain stiffness, which relaxes by degrees until the style of the translator is in its turn fashioned.

# BOOK FIRST

*This tale of my sore-troubled life I write,*
*To thank the God of nature, who conveyed*
*My soul to me, and with such care hath stayed*
*That divers noble deeds I've brought to light.*
*'Twas He subdued my cruel fortune's spite:*
*Life glory virtue measureless hath made*
*Such grace worth beauty be through me displayed*
*That few can rival, none surpass me quite.*
*Only it grieves me when I understand*
*What precious time in vanity I've spent—*
*The wind it beareth man's frail thoughts away.*
*Yet, since remorse avails not, I'm content,*
*As erst I came, Welcome to go one day,*
*Here in the Flower of this fair Tuscan land.*



BENVENUTO CELLINI
(PAINTED ON PORPHYRY)

# THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI

## BOOK FIRST

### I

LL men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, or which may properly resemble excellence, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hand; but they ought not to attempt so fine an enterprise till they have passed the age of forty. This duty occurs to my own mind, now that I am travelling beyond the term of fifty-eight years, and am in Florence, the city of my birth. Many untoward things can I remember, such as happen to all who live upon our earth; and from those adversities I am now more free than at any previous period of my career—nay, it seems to me that I enjoy greater content of soul and health of body than ever I did in bygone years. I can also bring to mind some pleasant goods and some inestimable evils, which, when I turn my thoughts backward, strike terror in me, and astonishment that I should have reached this age of fifty-eight, wherein, thanks be to God, I am still travelling prosperously forward.

### II

It is true that men who have laboured with some show of excellence, have already given knowledge

of themselves to the world; and this alone ought to suffice them; I mean the fact that they have proved their manhood and achieved renown. Yet one must needs live like others; and so in a work like this there will always be found occasion for natural bragging, which is of divers kinds, and the first is that a man should let others know he draws his lineage from persons of worth and most ancient origin.

I am called Benvenuto Cellini, son of Maestro Giovanni, son of Andrea, son of Cristofano Cellini; my mother was Madonna Elisabetta, daughter to Stefano Granacci; both parents citizens of Florence. It is found written in chronicles made by our ancestors of Florence, men of old time and of credibility, even as Giovanni Villani writes, that the city of Florence was evidently built in imitation of the fair city of Rome; and certain remnants of the Colosseum and the Baths can yet be traced. These things are near Santa Croce. The Capitol was where is now the Old Market. The Rotonda is entire, which was made for the temple of Mars, and is now dedicated to our Saint John. That thus it was, can very well be seen, and cannot be denied; but the said buildings are much smaller than those of Rome. He who caused them to be built, they say, was Julius Cæsar, in concert with some noble Romans, who, when Fiesole had been stormed and taken, raised a city in this place, and each of them took in hand to erect one of these notable edifices.

Julius Cæsar had among his captains a man of highest rank and valour, who was called Fiorino of Cellino, which is a village about two miles distant from Monte

Fiascone. Now this Fiorino took up his quarters under the hill of Fiesole, on the ground where Florence now stands, in order to be near the river Arno, and for the convenience of the troops. All those soldiers and others who had to do with the said captain, used then to say: "Let us go to Fiorenze;" as well because the said captain was called Fiorino, as also because the place he had chosen for his quarters was by nature very rich in flowers. Upon the foundation of the city, therefore, since this name struck Julius Cæsar as being fair and apt, and given by circumstance, and seeing furthermore that flowers themselves bring good augury, he appointed the name of Florence for the town. He wished besides to pay his valiant captain this compliment; and he loved him all the more for having drawn him from a very humble place, and for the reason that so excellent a man was a creature of his own. The name that learned inventors and investigators of such etymologies adduce, as that Florence is flowing at the Arno, cannot hold; seeing that Rome is flowing at the Tiber, Ferrara is flowing at the Po, Lyons is flowing at the Saone, Paris is flowing at the Seine, and yet the names of all these towns are different, and have come to them by other ways.[1]

Thus then we find; and thus we believe that we are descended from a man of worth. Furthermore, we find that there are Cellinis of our stock in Ra-

[1] *He is alluding to the name Fluenzia, which some antiquaries of his day thought to have been the earliest name of the city, derived from its being near "Arno fluente." I have translated the word "fluente" in the text literally, though of course it signifies "situated on a flowing river." I need not call attention to the apocryphal nature of Cellini's own derivation from the name of his supposed ancestor.*

venna, that most ancient town of Italy, where too are plenty of gentle folk. In Pisa also there are some, and I have discovered them in many parts of Christendom; and in this state also the breed exists, men devoted to the profession of arms; for not many years ago a young man, called Luca Cellini, a beardless youth, fought with a soldier of experience and a most valorous man, named Francesco da Vicorati, who had frequently fought before in single combat. This Luca, by his own valour, with sword in hand, overcame and slew him, with such bravery and stoutness that he moved the folk to wonder, who were expecting quite the contrary issue; so that I glory in tracing my descent from men of valour.

As for the trifling honours which I have gained for my house, under the well-known conditions of our present ways of living, and by means of my art, albeit the same are matters of no great moment, I will relate these in their proper time and place, taking much more pride in having been born humble and having laid some honourable foundation for my family, than if I had been born of great lineage and had stained or overclouded that by my base qualities. So then I will make a beginning by saying how it pleased God I should be born.

III

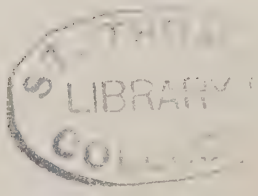
My ancestors dwelt in Val d'Ambra, where they owned large estates, and lived like little lords, in retirement, however, on account of the then contending factions. They were all men devoted to

arms and of notable bravery. In that time one of their sons, the younger, who was called Cristofano, roused a great feud with certain of their friends and neighbours. Now the heads of the families on both sides took part in it, and the fire kindled seemed to them so threatening that their houses were like to perish utterly; the elders upon this consideration, in concert with my own ancestors, removed Cristofano; and the other youth with whom the quarrel began was also sent away. They sent their young man to Siena. Our folk sent Cristofano to Florence; and there they bought for him a little house in Via Chiara, close to the convent of S. Orsola, and they also purchased for him some very good property near the Ponte a Rifredi. The said Cristofano took wife in Florence, and had sons and daughters; and when all the daughters had been portioned off, the sons, after their father's death, divided what remained. The house in Via Chiara with some other trifles fell to the share of one of the said sons, who had the name of Andrea. He also took wife, and had four male children. The first was called Girolamo, the second Bartolommeo, the third Giovanni, who was afterwards my father, and the fourth Francesco. This Andrea Cellini was very well versed in architecture, as it was then practised, and lived by it as his trade. Giovanni, who was my father, paid more attention to it than any of the other brothers. And since Vitruvius says, amongst other things, that one who wishes to practise that art well must have something of music and good drawing, Giovanni, when he had mastered drawing, began to turn his mind to music,

and together with the theory learned to play most excellently on the viol and the flute; and being a person of studious habits, he left his home but seldom.

They had for neighbour in the next house a man called Stefano Granacci, who had several daughters, all of them of remarkable beauty. As it pleased God, Giovanni noticed one of these girls who was named Elisabetta; and she found such favour with him that he asked her in marriage. The fathers of both of them being well acquainted through their close neighbourhood, it was easy to make this match up; and each thought that he had very well arranged his affairs. First of all the two good old men agreed upon the marriage; then they began to discuss the dowry, which led to a certain amount of friendly difference; for Andrea said to Stefano: "My son Giovanni is the stoutest youth of Florence, and of all Italy to boot, and if I had wanted earlier to have him married, I could have procured one of the largest dowries which folk of our rank get in Florence:" whereupon Stefano answered: "You have a thousand reasons on your side; but here am I with five daughters and as many sons, and when my reckoning is made, this is as much as I can possibly afford." Giovanni, who had been listening awhile unseen by them, suddenly broke in and said: "O my father, I have sought and loved that girl and not their money. Ill luck to those who seek to fill their pockets by the dowry of their wife! As you have boasted that I am a fellow of such parts, do you not think that I shall be able to provide for my wife and satisfy her needs, even if I receive





something short of the portion you would like to get? Now I must make you understand that the woman is mine, and you may take the dowry for yourself." At this Andrea Cellini, who was a man of rather awkward temper, grew a trifle angry; but after a few days Giovanni took his wife, and never asked for other portion with her.

They enjoyed their youth and wedded love through eighteen years, always greatly desiring to be blessed with children. At the end of this time Giovanni's wife miscarried of two boys through the unskilfulness of the doctors. Later on she was again with child, and gave birth to a girl, whom they called Cosa, after the mother of my father.[1] At the end of two years she was once more with child; and inasmuch as those longings to which pregnant women are subject, and to which they pay much attention, were now exactly the same as those of her former pregnancy, they made their minds up that she would give birth to a female as before, and agreed to call the child Reparata, after the mother of my mother. It happened that she was delivered on a night of All Saints, following the feast-day, at half-past four precisely, in the year 1500.[2] The midwife, who knew that they were expecting a girl, after she had washed the baby and wrapped it in the fairest white linen, came softly to my father Giovanni and said: "I am bringing you a fine present, such as you did not anticipate." My father, who was a true philosopher, was walking up and down,

[1] *Cosa is Florentine for Niccolosa.*

[2] *The hour is reckoned, according to the old Italian fashion, from sunset of one day to sunset of the next — twenty-four hours.*

and answered: "What God gives me is alway dear to me;" and when he opened the swaddling clothes, he saw with his own eyes the unexpected male child. Joining together the palms of his old hands, he raised them with his eyes to God, and said: "Lord, I thank Thee with my whole heart; this gift is very dear to me; let him be Welcome." All the persons who were there asked him joyfully what name the child should bear. Giovanni would make no other answer than "Let him be Welcome—Benvenuto;"[1] and so they resolved, and this name was given me at Holy Baptism, and by it I still am living with the grace of God.

IV

Andrea Cellini was yet alive when I was about three years old, and he had passed his hundredth. One day they had been altering a certain conduit pertaining to a cistern, and there issued from it a great scorpion unperceived by them, which crept down from the cistern to the ground, and slank away beneath a bench. I saw it, and ran up to it, and laid my hands upon it. It was so big that when I had it in my little hands, it put out its tail on one side, and on the other thrust forth both its mouths.[2] They relate that I ran in high joy to my grandfather, crying out: "Look, grandpapa, at my pretty little crab." When he recognised that the creature was a scorpion, he was on the point of falling dead for the great fear he had and anxiety about me. He coaxed and entreated me to

[1] *Benvenuto means Welcome.*

[2] *The word is bocche, so I have translated it by mouths. But Cellini clearly meant the gaping claws of the scorpion.*

give it him; but the more he begged, the tighter I clasped it, crying and saying I would not give it to any one. My father, who was also in the house, ran up when he heard my screams, and in his stupefaction could not think how to prevent the venomous animal from killing me. Just then his eyes chanced to fall upon a pair of scissors; and so, while soothing and caressing me, he cut its tail and mouths off. Afterwards, when the great peril had been thus averted, he took the occurrence for a good augury.

When I was about five years old my father happened to be in a basement-chamber of our house, where they had been washing, and where a good fire of oak-logs was still burning; he had a viol in his hand, and was playing and singing alone beside the fire. The weather was very cold. Happening to look into the fire, he spied in the middle of those most burning flames a little creature like a lizard, which was sporting in the core of the intensest coals. Becoming instantly aware of what the thing was, he had my sister and me called, and pointing it out to us children, gave me a great box on the ears, which caused me to howl and weep with all my might. Then he pacified me good-humouredly, and spoke as follows: "My dear little boy, I am not striking you for any wrong that you have done, but only to make you remember that that lizard which you see in the fire is a salamander, a creature which has never been seen before by any one of whom we have credible information." So saying, he kissed me and gave me some pieces of money.

V

My father began teaching me to play upon the flute and sing by note; but notwithstanding I was of that tender age when little children are wont to take pastime in whistles and such toys, I had an inexpressible dislike for it, and played and sang only to obey him. My father in those times fashioned wonderful organs with pipes of wood, spinets the fairest and most excellent which then could be seen, viols and lutes and harps of the most beautiful and perfect construction. He was an engineer, and had marvellous skill in making instruments for lowering bridges and for working mills, and other machines of that sort. In ivory he was the first who wrought really well. But after he had fallen in love with the woman who was destined to become my mother—perhaps what brought them together was that little flute, to which indeed he paid more attention than was proper—he was entreated by the fifers of the Signory to play in their company. Accordingly he did so for some time to amuse himself, until by constant importunity they induced him to become a member of their band. Lorenzo de' Medici and Piero his son, who had a great liking for him, perceived later on that he was devoting himself wholly to the fife, and was neglecting his fine engineering talent and his beautiful art.[1] So they had him removed from that post. My father took this very ill,

[1] *The Medici here mentioned were Lorenzo the Magnificent, and his son Pietro, who was expelled from Florence in the year* 1494. *He never returned, but died in the river Garigliano in* 1504.

LORENZO DE' MEDICI
CALLED THE MAGNIFICENT
(VASARI)

and it seemed to him that they had done him a great despite. Yet he immediately resumed his art, and fashioned a mirror, about a cubit in diameter, out of bone and ivory, with figures and foliage of great finish and grand design. The mirror was in the form of a wheel. In the middle was the looking-glass; around it were seven circular pieces, on which were the Seven Virtues, carved and joined of ivory and black bone. The whole mirror, together with the Virtues, was placed in equilibrium, so that when the wheel turned, all the Virtues moved, and they had weights at their feet which kept them upright. Possessing some acquaintance with the Latin tongue, he put a legend in Latin round his looking-glass, to this effect: "Whithersoever the wheel of Fortune turns, Virtue stands firm upon her feet:"

*Rota sum: semper, quoquo me verto, stat Virtus.*

A little while after this he obtained his place again among the fifers. Although some of these things happened before I was born, my familiarity with them has moved me to set them down here. In those days the musicians of the Signory were all of them members of the most honourable trades, and some of them belonged to the greater guilds of silk and wool;[1] and that was the reason why my father did not disdain to follow this profession, and his chief desire with regard to me was always that I should become a great performer on the flute. I for my

[1] *In the Middle Ages the burghers of Florence were divided into industrial guilds called the Greater and the Lesser Arts. The former took precedence of the latter, both in political importance and in social esteem.*

part felt never more discontented than when he chose to talk to me about this scheme, and to tell me that, if I liked, he discerned in me such aptitudes that I might become the best man in the world.

VI

As I have said, my father was the devoted servant and attached friend of the house of Medici; and when Piero was banished, he entrusted him with many affairs of the greatest possible importance. Afterwards, when the magnificent Piero Soderini was elected, and my father continued in his office of musician, Soderini, perceiving his wonderful talent, began to employ him in many matters of great importance as an engineer.[1] So long as Soderini remained in Florence, he showed the utmost goodwill to my father; and in those days, I being still of tender age, my father had me carried, and made me perform upon the flute; I used to play treble in concert with the musicians of the palace before the Signory, following my notes: and a beadle used to carry me upon his shoulders. The Gonfalonier, that is, Soderini, whom I have already mentioned, took much pleasure in making me chatter, and gave me comfits, and was wont to say to my father: "Maestro Giovanni, beside music, teach the boy those other arts which do you so much honour." To which my father answered: "I do not wish him to practise any art but playing and composing; for in this profession

[1] *Piero Soderini was elected Gonfalonier of the Florentine Republic for life in the year 1502. After nine years of government, he was banished, and when he died, Machiavelli wrote the famous sneering epitaph upon him. See Renaissance in Italy, vol. i. p. 297.*

I hope to make him the greatest man of the world, if God prolongs his life." To these words one of the old counsellors made answer: "Ah! Maestro Giovanni, do what the Gonfalonier tells you! for why should he never become anything more than a good musician?"

Thus some time passed, until the Medici returned.[1] When they arrived, the Cardinal, who afterwards became Pope Leo, received my father very kindly. During their exile the scutcheons which were on the palace of the Medici had had their balls erased, and a great red cross painted over them, which was the bearing of the Commune.[2] Accordingly, as soon as they returned, the red cross was scratched out, and on the scutcheon the red balls and the golden field were painted in again, and finished with great beauty. My father, who possessed a simple vein of poetry, instilled in him by nature, together with a certain touch of prophecy, which was doubtless a divine gift in him, wrote these four verses under the said arms of the Medici, when they were uncovered to the view:

*These arms, which have so long from sight been laid*
*Beneath the holy cross, that symbol meek,*
*Now lift their glorious glad face, and seek*
*With Peter's sacred cloak to be arrayed.*

This epigram was read by all Florence. A few days afterwards Pope Julius II. died. The Cardinal de'

[1] *This was in 1512, when Lorenzo's two sons, Giuliano and Giovanni (afterwards Pope Leo X.), came back through the aid of a Spanish army, after the great battle at Ravenna.*

[2] *The Medicean arms were "or, six pellets gules, three, two, and one." The Florentine Commune bore, "argent a cross gules."*

Medici went to Rome, and was elected Pope against the expectation of everybody. He reigned as Leo X., that generous and great soul. My father sent him his four prophetic verses. The Pope sent to tell him to come to Rome; for this would be to his advantage. But he had no will to go; and so, in lieu of reward, his place in the palace was taken from him by Jacopo Salviati, upon that man's election as Gonfalonier.[1] This was the reason why I commenced goldsmith; after which I spent part of my time in learning that art, and part in playing, much against my will.

VII

When my father spoke to me in the way I have above described, I entreated him to let me draw a certain fixed number of hours in the day; all the rest of my time I would give to music, only with the view of satisfying his desire. Upon this he said to me: "So then, you take no pleasure in playing?" To which I answered, "No;" because that art seemed too base in comparison with what I had in my own mind. My good father, driven to despair by this fixed idea of mine, placed me in the workshop of Cavaliere Bandinello's father, who was called Michel Agnolo, a goldsmith from Pinzi di Monte, and a master excellent in that craft.[2] He had no distinction of birth whatever, but was the son of a charcoal-seller. This is no

[1] *Cellini makes a mistake here. Salviati married a daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, and obtained great influence in Florence; but we have no record of his appointment to the office of Gonfalonier.*

[2] *Baccio Bandinello, the sculptor, and a great rival of Cellini's, as will appear in the ensuing pages, was born in* 1487, *and received the honour of knighthood from Clement VII. and Charles V. Posterity has confirmed Cellini's opinion of Bandinello*

blame to Bandinello, who has founded the honour of the family—if only he had done so honestly! However that may be, I have no cause now to talk about him. After I had stayed there some days, my father took me away from Michel Agnolo, finding himself unable to live without having me always under his eyes. Accordingly, much to my discontent, I remained at music till I reached the age of fifteen. If I were to describe all the wonderful things that happened to me up to that time, and all the great dangers to my own life which I ran, I should astound my readers; but, in order to avoid prolixity, and having very much to relate, I will omit these incidents.

When I reached the age of fifteen, I put myself, against my father's will, to the goldsmith's trade with a man called Antonio, son of Sandro, known commonly as Marcone the goldsmith. He was a most excellent craftsman and a very good fellow to boot, high-spirited and frank in all his ways. My father would not let him give me wages like the other apprentices; for having taken up the study of this art to please myself, he wished me to indulge my whim for drawing to the full. I did so willingly enough; and that honest master of mine took marvellous delight in my performances. He had an only son, a bastard, to whom he often gave his orders, in order to spare me. My liking for the art was so great, or, I may truly say, my natural bias, both one and the other, that in a few months I caught up the good, nay, the best young craftsmen in our business, and

*as an artist; for his works are coarse, pretentious, and incapable of giving pleasure to any person of refined intelligence.*

began to reap the fruits of my labours. I did not, however, neglect to gratify my good father from time to time by playing on the flute or cornet. Each time he heard me, I used to make his tears fall accompanied with deep-drawn sighs of satisfaction. My filial piety often made me give him that contentment, and induced me to pretend that I enjoyed the music too.

VIII

At that time I had a brother, younger by two years, a youth of extreme boldness and fierce temper. He afterwards became one of the great soldiers in the school of that marvellous general Giovannino de' Medici, father of Duke Cosimo.[1] The boy was about fourteen, and I two years older. One Sunday evening, just before nightfall, he happened to find himself between the gate San Gallo and the Porta a Pinti; in this quarter he came to duel with a young fellow of twenty or thereabouts. They both had swords; and my brother dealt so valiantly that, after having badly wounded him, he was upon the point of following up his advantage. There was a great crowd of people present, among whom were many of the adversary's kinsfolk. Seeing that the thing was going ill for their own man, they put hand to their slings, a stone from one of which hit my poor brother in the head. He fell to the ground at once in a dead faint. It so chanced that I had been upon the spot alone, and without

[1] *Cellini refers to the famous Giovanni delle Bande Nere, who was killed in an engagement in Lombardy in November 1526 by the Imperialist troops marching to the sack of Rome. His son Cosimo, after the murder of Duke Alessandro, established the second Medicean dynasty in Florence.*

arms; and I had done my best to get my brother out of the fray by calling to him: "Make off; you have done enough." Meanwhile, as luck would have it, he fell, as I have said, half dead to earth. I ran up at once, seized his sword, and stood in front of him, bearing the brunt of several rapiers and a shower of stones. I never left his side until some brave soldiers came from the gate San Gallo and rescued me from the raging crowd; they marvelled much, the while, to find such valour in so young a boy.

Then I carried my brother home for dead, and it was only with great difficulty that he came to himself again. When he was cured, the Eight, who had already condemned our adversaries and banished them for a term of years, sent us also into exile for six months at a distance of ten miles from Florence.[1] I said to my brother: "Come along with me;" and so we took leave of our poor father; and instead of giving us money, for he had none, he bestowed on us his blessing. I went to Siena, wishing to look up a certain worthy man called Maestro Francesco Castoro. On another occasion, when I had run away from my father, I went to this good man, and stayed some time with him, working at the goldsmith's trade until my father sent for me back. Francesco, when I reached him, recognised me at once, and gave me work to do. While thus occupied, he placed a house at my disposal for the whole time of my sojourn in Siena. Into this I moved, together with my brother, and applied myself to labour for the space of several months.

[1] *The Eight, or Gli Otto, were a magistracy in Florence with cognisance of matters affecting the internal peace of the city.*

My brother had acquired the rudiments of Latin, but was still so young that he could not yet relish the taste of virtuous employment, but passed his time in dissipation.

IX

The Cardinal de' Medici, who afterwards became Pope Clement VII., had us recalled to Florence at the entreaty of my father.[1] A certain pupil of my father's, moved by his own bad nature, suggested to the Cardinal that he ought to send me to Bologna, in order to learn to play well from a great master there. The name of this master was Antonio, and he was in truth a worthy man in the musician's art. The Cardinal said to my father that, if he sent me there, he would give me letters of recommendation and support. My father, dying with joy at such an opportunity, sent me off; and I being eager to see the world, went with good grace.

When I reached Bologna, I put myself under a certain Maestro Ercole del Piffero, and began to earn something by my trade. In the meantime I used to go every day to take my music-lesson, and in a few weeks made considerable progress in that accursed art. However, I made still greater in my trade of goldsmith; for the Cardinal having given me no assistance, I went to live with a Bolognese

[1] *This Cardinal and Pope was Giulio, a natural son of Giuliano, Lorenzo de' Medici's brother, who had been killed in the Pazzi conspiracy, year* 1478. *Giulio lived to become Pope Clement VII., to suffer the sack of Rome in* 1527, *and to make the concordat with Charles V. at Bologna in* 1529–30, *which settled for three centuries the destiny of Italy. We shall hear much more of him from Cellini in the course of this narrative.*

illuminator who was called Scipione Cavalletti (his house was in the street of our Lady del Baraccan); and while there I devoted myself to drawing and working for one Graziadio, a Jew, with whom I earned considerably.

At the end of six months I returned to Florence, where that fellow Pierino, who had been my father's pupil, was greatly mortified by my return. To please my father, I went to his house and played the cornet and the flute with one of his brothers, who was named Girolamo, several years younger than the said Piero, a very worthy young man, and quite the contrary of his brother. On one of those days my father came to Piero's house to hear us play, and in ecstasy at my performance exclaimed: "I shall yet make you a marvellous musician against the will of all or any one who may desire to prevent me." To this Piero answered, and spoke the truth: "Your Benvenuto will get much more honour and profit if he devotes himself to the goldsmith's trade than to this piping." These words made my father so angry, seeing that I too had the same opinion as Piero, that he flew into a rage and cried out at him: "Well did I know that it was you, *you* who put obstacles in the way of my cherished wish; you are the man who had me ousted from my place at the palace, paying me back with that black ingratitude which is the usual recompense of great benefits. I got you promoted, and you have got me cashiered; I taught you to play with all the little art you have, and you are preventing my son from obeying me; but bear in mind these words of prophecy: not years

or months, I say, but only a few weeks will pass before this dirty ingratitude of yours shall plunge you into ruin." To these words answered Pierino and said: "Maestro Giovanni, the majority of men, when they grow old, go mad at the same time; and this has happened to you. I am not astonished at it, because most liberally have you squandered all your property, without reflecting that your children had need of it. I mind to do just the opposite, and to leave my children so much that they shall be able to succour yours." To this my father answered: "No bad tree ever bore good fruit; quite the contrary; and I tell you further that you are bad, and that your children will be mad and paupers, and will cringe for alms to my virtuous and wealthy sons." Thereupon we left the house, muttering words of anger on both sides. I had taken my father's part; and when we stepped into the street together, I told him I was quite ready to take vengeance for the insults heaped on him by that scoundrel, provided you permit me to give myself up to the art of design. He answered: "My dear son, I too in my time was a good draughtsman; but for recreation, after such stupendous labours, and for the love of me who am your father, who begat you and brought you up and implanted so many honourable talents in you, for the sake of recreation, I say, will not you promise sometimes to take in hand your flute and that seductive cornet, and to play upon them to your heart's content, inviting the delight of music?" I promised I would do so, and very willingly for his love's sake. Then my good

father said that such excellent parts as I possessed would be the greatest vengeance I could take for the insults of his enemies.

Not a whole month had been completed after this scene before the man Pierino happened to be building a vault in a house of his, which he had in the Via dello Studio; and being one day in a ground-floor room above the vault which he was making, together with much company around him, he fell to talking about his old master, my father. While repeating the words which he had said to him concerning his ruin, no sooner had they escaped his lips than the floor where he was standing (either because the vault had been badly built, or rather through the sheer mightiness of God, who does not always pay on Saturday) suddenly gave way. Some of the stones and bricks of the vault, which fell with him, broke both his legs. The friends who were with him, remaining on the border of the broken vault, took no harm, but were astounded and full of wonder, especially because of the prophecy which he had just contemptuously repeated to them. When my father heard of this, he took his sword, and went to see the man. There, in the presence of his father, who was called Niccolaio da Volterra, a trumpeter of the Signory, he said: "O Piero, my dear pupil, I am sorely grieved at your mischance; but if you remember, it was only a short time ago that I warned you of it; and as much as I then said will come to happen between your children and mine." Shortly afterwards, the ungrateful Piero died of that illness. He left a wife of bad character and one son, who after the

lapse of some years came to me to beg for alms in Rome. I gave him something, as well because it is my nature to be charitable, as also because I recalled with tears the happy state which Pierino held when my father spake those words of prophecy, namely, that Pierino's children should live to crave succour from his own virtuous sons. Of this perhaps enough is now said; but let none ever laugh at the prognostications of any worthy man whom he has wrongfully insulted; because it is not he who speaks, nay, but the very voice of God through him.

X

All this while I worked as a goldsmith, and was able to assist my good father. His other son, my brother Cecchino, had, as I said before, been instructed in the rudiments of Latin letters. It was our father's wish to make me, the elder, a great musician and composer, and him, the younger, a great and learned jurist. He could not, however, put force upon the inclinations of our nature, which directed me to the arts of design, and my brother, who had a fine and graceful person, to the profession of arms. Cecchino, being still quite a lad, was returning from his first lesson in the school of the stupendous Giovannino de' Medici. On the day when he reached home, I happened to be absent; and he, being in want of proper clothes, sought out our sisters, who, unknown to my father, gave him a cloak and doublet of mine, both new and of good quality. I ought to say that, beside the aid I gave my father and my excellent and honest sisters, I had bought those handsome

clothes out of my own savings. When I found I had been cheated, and my clothes taken from me, and my brother from whom I should have recovered them was gone, I asked my father why he suffered so great a wrong to be done me, seeing that I was always ready to assist him. He replied that I was his good son, but that the other, whom he thought to have lost, had been found again; also that it was a duty, nay, a precept from God Himself, that he who hath should give to him who hath not; and that for his sake I ought to bear this injustice, for God would increase me in all good things. I, like a youth without experience, retorted on my poor afflicted parent; and taking the miserable remnants of my clothes and money, went toward a gate of the city. As I did not know which gate would start me on the road to Rome, I arrived at Lucca, and from Lucca reached Pisa.

When I came to Pisa (I was about sixteen years of age at the time), I stopped near the middle bridge, by what is called the Fish-stone, at the shop of a goldsmith, and began attentively to watch what the master was about.[1] He asked me who I was, and what was my profession. I told him that I worked a little in the same trade as his own. This worthy man bade me come into his shop, and at once gave me work to do, and spoke as follows: "Your good appearance makes me believe you are a decent honest youth." Then he told me out gold, silver, and gems; and when the first day's work was finished, he took

[1] *The Fish-stone, or Pietra del Pesce, was the market on the quay where the fish brought from the sea up the Arno to Pisa used to be sold.*

me in the evening to his house, where he dwelt respectably with his handsome wife and children. Thinking of the grief which my good father might be feeling for me, I wrote him that I was sojourning with a very excellent and honest man, called Maestro Ulivieri della Chiostra, and was working with him at many things of beauty and importance. I bade him be of good cheer, for that I was bent on learning, and hoped by my acquirements to bring him back both profit and honour before long. My good father answered the letter at once in words like these: "My son, the love I bear you is so great, that if it were not for the honour of our family, which above all things I regard, I should immediately have set off for you; for indeed it seems like being without the light of my eyes, when I do not see you daily, as I used to do. I will make it my business to complete the training of my household up to virtuous honesty; do you make it yours to acquire excellence in your art; and I only wish you to remember these four simple words, obey them, and never let them escape your memory:

*In whatever house you be,*
*Steal not, and live honestly.*"

XI

This letter fell into the hands of my master Ulivieri, and he read it unknown to me. Afterwards he avowed that he had read it, and added: "So then, my Benvenuto, your good looks did not deceive me, as a letter from your father which has come into my hands gives me assurance, which proves him to be a man

of notable honesty and worth. Consider yourself then to be at home here, and as though in your own father's house."

While I stayed at Pisa, I went to see the Campo Santo, and there I found many beautiful fragments of antiquity, that is to say, marble sarcophagi. In other parts of Pisa also I saw many antique objects, which I diligently studied whenever I had days or hours free from the labour of the workshop. My master, who took pleasure in coming to visit me in the little room which he had allotted me, observing that I spent all my time in studious occupations, began to love me like a father. I made great progress in the one year that I stayed there, and completed several fine and valuable things in gold and silver, which inspired me with a resolute ambition to advance in my art.

My father, in the meanwhile, kept writing piteous entreaties that I should return to him; and in every letter bade me not to lose the music he had taught me with such trouble. On this, I suddenly gave up all wish to go back to him; so much did I hate that accursed music; and I felt as though of a truth I were in paradise the whole year I stayed at Pisa, where I never played the flute.

At the end of the year my master Ulivieri had occasion to go to Florence, in order to sell certain gold and silver sweepings which he had;[1] and inasmuch as the bad air of Pisa had given me a touch of fever, I went with the fever hanging still about me, in my

[1] *I have translated spazzature by sweepings. It means all refuse of the precious metals left in the goldsmith's trays.*

master's company, back to Florence. There my father received him most affectionately, and lovingly prayed him, unknown by me, not to insist on taking me again to Pisa. I was ill about two months, during which time my father had me most kindly treated and cured, always repeating that it seemed to him a thousand years till I got well again, in order that he might hear me play a little. But when he talked to me of music, with his fingers on my pulse, seeing he had some acquaintance with medicine and Latin learning, he felt it change so much if he approached that topic, that he was often dismayed and left my side in tears. When I perceived how greatly he was disappointed, I bade one of my sisters bring me a flute; for though the fever never left me, that instrument is so easy that it did not hurt me to play upon it; and I used it with such dexterity of hand and tongue that my father, coming suddenly upon me, blessed me a thousand times, exclaiming that while I was away from him I had made great progress, as he thought; and he begged me to go forwards, and not to sacrifice so fine an accomplishment.

XII

When I had recovered my health, I returned to my old friend Marcone, the worthy goldsmith, who put me in the way of earning money, with which I helped my father and our household. About that time there came to Florence a sculptor named Piero Torrigiani;[1] he arrived from England, where he had resided many years; and being intimate with my master, he daily

[1] *Torrigiani worked in fact for Henry VIII., and his monument to Henry VII. still*

visited his house; and when he saw my drawings and the things which I was making, he said: "I have come to Florence to enlist as many young men as I can; for I have undertaken to execute a great work for my king, and want some of my own Florentines to help me. Now your method of working and your designs are worthy rather of a sculptor than a goldsmith; and since I have to turn out a great piece of bronze, I will at the same time turn you into a rich and able artist." This man had a splendid person and a most arrogant spirit, with the air of a great soldier more than of a sculptor, especially in regard to his vehement gestures and his resonant voice, together with a habit he had of knitting his brows, enough to frighten any man of courage. He kept talking every day about his gallant feats among those beasts of Englishmen.

In course of conversation he happened to mention Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, led thereto by a drawing I had made from a cartoon of that divinest painter.[1] This cartoon was the first masterpiece which Michel Agnolo exhibited, in proof of his stupendous talents. He produced it in competition with another painter, Lionardo da Vinci, who also made a cartoon; and both were intended for the council-hall in the palace

*exists in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey. From England he went to Spain, where he modelled a statue of the Virgin for a great nobleman. Not receiving the pay he expected, he broke his work to pieces; for which act of sacrilege the Inquisition sent him to prison, where he starved himself to death in 1522. Such at least is the legend of his end.*

[1] *The cartoons to which Cellini here alludes were made by Michel Angelo and Lionardo for the decoration of the Sala del Gran Consiglio in the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. Only the shadows of them remain to this day; a part of Michel Angelo's, engraved by Schiavonetti, and a transcript by Rubens from Lionardo's, called the Battle of the Standard.*

of the Signory. They represented the taking of Pisa by the Florentines; and our admirable Lionardo had chosen to depict a battle of horses, with the capture of some standards, in as divine a style as could possibly be imagined. Michel Agnolo in his cartoon portrayed a number of foot-soldiers, who, the season being summer, had gone to bathe in Arno. He drew them at the very moment the alarm is sounded, and the men all naked run to arms; so splendid in their action that nothing survives of ancient or of modern art which touches the same lofty point of excellence; and as I have already said, the design of the great Lionardo was itself most admirably beautiful. These two cartoons stood, one in the palace of the Medici, the other in the hall of the Pope. So long as they remained intact, they were the school of the world. Though the divine Michel Agnolo in later life finished that great chapel of Pope Julius,[1] he never rose half-way to the same pitch of power; his genius never afterwards attained to the force of those first studies.

XIII

Now let us return to Piero Torrigiani, who, with my drawing in his hand, spoke as follows: "This Buonarroti and I used, when we were boys, to go into the Church of the Carmine, to learn drawing from the chapel of Masaccio.[2] It was Buonarroti's habit to banter all who were drawing there; and one day, among others, when he was annoying me, I

[1] *The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.*

[2] *The Chapel of the Carmine, painted in fresco by Masaccio and some other artist, possibly Filippino Lippi, is still the most important monument of Florentine art surviving from the period preceding Raphael.*

got more angry than usual, and clenching my fist, gave him such a blow on the nose, that I felt bone and cartilage go down like biscuit beneath my knuckles; and this mark of mine he will carry with him to the grave."[1] These words begat in me such hatred of the man, since I was always gazing at the masterpieces of the divine Michel Agnolo, that although I felt a wish to go with him to England, I now could never bear the sight of him.

All the while I was at Florence, I studied the noble manner of Michel Agnolo, and from this I have never deviated. About that time I contracted a close and familiar friendship with an amiable lad of my own age, who was also in the goldsmith's trade. He was called Francesco, son of Filippo, and grandson of Fra Lippo Lippi, that most excellent painter.[2] Through intercourse together, such love grew up between us that, day or night, we never stayed apart. The house where he lived was still full of the fine studies which his father had made, bound up in several books of drawings by his hand, and taken from the best antiquities of Rome. The sight of these things filled me with passionate enthusiasm; and for two years or thereabouts we lived in intimacy. At that time I fashioned a silver bas-relief of the size of a little

[1] *The profile portraits of Michel Angelo Buonarroti confirm this story. They show the bridge of his nose bent in an angle, as though it had been broken.*

[2] *Fra Filippo Lippi was a Carmelite monk, whose frescoes at Prato and Spoleto and oil-paintings in Florence and elsewhere are among the most genial works of the pre-Raphaelite Renaissance. Vasari narrates his love-adventures with Lucrezia Buti, and Robert Browning has drawn a clever portrait of him in his "Men and Women." His son, Filippo or Filippino, was also an able painter, some of whose best work survives in the Strozzi Chapel of S. Maria Novella at Florence, and in the Church of S. Maria Sopra Minerva at Rome.*

child's hand. It was intended for the clasp to a man's belt; for they were then worn as large as that. I carved on it a knot of leaves in the antique style, with figures of children and other masks of great beauty. This piece I made in the workshop of one Francesco Salimbene; and on its being exhibited to the trade, the goldsmiths praised me as the best young craftsman of their art.

There was one Giovan Battista, surnamed Il Tasso, a wood-carver, precisely of my own age, who one day said to me that if I was willing to go to Rome, he should be glad to join me.[1] Now we had this conversation together immediately after dinner; and I being angry with my father for the same old reason of the music, said to Tasso: "You are a fellow of words, not deeds." He answered: "I too have come to anger with my mother; and if I had cash enough to take me to Rome, I would not turn back to lock the door of that wretched little workshop I call mine." To these words I replied that if that was all that kept him in Florence I had money enough in my pockets to bring us both to Rome. Talking thus and walking onwards, we found ourselves at the gate San Piero Gattolini without noticing that we had got there; whereupon I said: "Friend Tasso, this is God's doing that we have reached this gate without either you or me noticing that we were there; and now that I am here, it seems to me that I have finished half the journey." And so, being of one accord, we

[1] *Tasso was an able artist, mentioned both by Vasari and Pietro Aretino. He stood high in the favour of Duke Cosimo de' Medici, who took his opinion on the work of other craftsmen.*

pursued our way together, saying, "Oh, what will our old folks say this evening?" We then made an agreement not to think more about them till we reached Rome. So we tied our aprons behind our backs, and trudged almost in silence to Siena. When we arrived at Siena, Tasso said (for he had hurt his feet) that he would not go farther, and asked me to lend him money to get back. I made answer: "I should not have enough left to go forward: you ought indeed to have thought of this on leaving Florence; and if it is because of your feet that you shirk the journey, we will find a return horse for Rome, which will deprive you of the excuse." Accordingly I hired a horse; and seeing that he did not answer, I took my way toward the gate of Rome. When he knew that I was firmly resolved to go, muttering between his teeth, and limping as well as he could, he came on behind me very slowly and at a great distance. On reaching the gate, I felt pity for my comrade, and waited for him, and took him on the crupper, saying: "What would our friends speak of us to-morrow, if, having left for Rome, we had not pluck to get beyond Siena?" Then the good Tasso said I spoke the truth; and as he was a pleasant fellow, he began to laugh and sing; and in this way, always singing and laughing, we travelled the whole way to Rome. I had just nineteen years then, and so had the century.

When we reached Rome, I put myself under a master who was known as Il Firenzuola. His name was Giovanni, and he came from Firenzuola in Lombardy, a most able craftsman in large vases and big

plate of that kind. I showed him part of the model for the clasp which I had made in Florence at Salimbene's. It pleased him exceedingly; and turning to one of his journeymen, a Florentine called Giannotto Giannotti, who had been several years with him, he spoke as follows: "This fellow is one of the Florentines who know something, and you are one of those who know nothing." Then I recognised the man, and turned to speak with him; for before he went to Rome, we often went to draw together, and had been very intimate comrades. He was so put out by the words his master flung at him, that he said he did not recognise me or know who I was; whereupon I got angry, and cried out: "O Giannotto, you who were once my friend—for have we not been together in such and such places, and drawn, and ate, and drunk, and slept in company at your house in the country? I don't want you to bear witness on my behalf to this worthy man, your master, because I hope my hands are such that without aid from you they will declare what sort of a fellow I am."

XIV

When I had thus spoken, Firenzuola, who was a man of hot spirit and brave, turned to Giannotto, and said to him: "You vile rascal, aren't you ashamed to treat a man who has been so intimate a comrade with you in this way?" And with the same movement of quick feeling, he faced round and said to me: "Welcome to my workshop; and do as you have promised; let your hands declare what man you are."

He gave me a very fine piece of silver plate to work

on for a cardinal. It was a little oblong box, copied from the porphyry sarcophagus before the door of the Rotonda. Beside what I copied, I enriched it with so many elegant masks of my invention, that my master went about showing it through the art, and boasting that so good a piece of work had been turned out from his shop.[1] It was about half a cubit in size, and was so constructed as to serve for a salt-cellar at table. This was the first earning that I touched at Rome, and part of it I sent to assist my good father; the rest I kept for my own use, living upon it while I went about studying the antiquities of Rome, until my money failed, and I had to return to the shop for work. Battista del Tasso, my comrade, did not stay long in Rome, but went back to Florence.

After undertaking some new commissions, I took it into my head, as soon as I had finished them, to change my master; I had indeed been worried into doing so by a certain Milanese, called Pagolo Arsago.[2] My first master, Firenzuola, had a great quarrel about this with Arsago, and abused him in my presence; whereupon I took up speech in defence of my new master. I said that I was born free, and free I meant to live, and that there was no reason to complain of him, far less of me, since some few crowns of wages were still due to me; also that I chose to go, like a free journeyman, where it pleased me,

[1] *Cellini's use of the word arte for the art or trade of goldsmiths corresponds to "the art" as used by English writers early in this century. See Haydon's Autobiography, passim.*

[2] *The Italian is sobbillato, which might be also translated inveigled or instigated. But Varchi, the contemporary of Cellini, gives this verb the force of using pressure and boring on until somebody is driven to do something.*

knowing I did wrong to no man. My new master then put in with his excuses, saying that he had not asked me to come, and that I should gratify him by returning with Firenzuola. To this I replied that I was not aware of wronging the latter in any way, and as I had completed his commissions, I chose to be my own master and not the man of others, and that he who wanted me must beg me of myself. Firenzuola cried: "I don't intend to beg you of yourself; I have done with you; don't show yourself again upon my premises." I reminded him of the money he owed me. He laughed me in the face; on which I said that if I knew how to use my tools in handicraft as well as he had seen, I could be quite as clever with my sword in claiming the just payment of my labour. While we were exchanging these words, an old man happened to come up, called Maestro Antonio, of San Marino. He was the chief among the Roman goldsmiths, and had been Firenzuola's master. Hearing what I had to say, which I took good care that he should understand, he immediately espoused my cause, and bade Firenzuola pay me. The dispute waxed warm, because Firenzuola was an admirable swordsman, far better than he was a goldsmith. Yet reason made itself heard; and I backed my cause with the same spirit, till I got myself paid. In course of time Firenzuola and I became friends, and at his request I stood godfather to one of his children.

## XV

I went on working with Pagolo Arsago, and earned a good deal of money, the greater part of which I

always sent to my good father. At the end of two years, upon my father's entreaty, I returned to Florence, and put myself once more under Francesco Salimbene, with whom I earned a great deal, and took continual pains to improve in my art. I renewed my intimacy with Francesco di Filippo; and though I was too much given to pleasure, owing to that accursed music, I never neglected to devote some hours of the day or night to study. At that time I fashioned a silver heart's-key (chiavaquore), as it was then called. This was a girdle three inches broad, which used to be made for brides, and was executed in half relief with some small figures in the round. It was a commission from a man called Raffaello Lapaccini. I was very badly paid; but the honour which it brought me was worth far more than the gain I might have justly made by it. Having at this time worked with many different persons in Florence, I had come to know some worthy men among the goldsmiths, as, for instance, Marcone, my first master; but I also met with others reputed honest, who did all they could to ruin me, and robbed me grossly. When I perceived this, I left their company, and held them for thieves and blackguards. One of the goldsmiths, called Giovanbattista Sogliani, kindly accommodated me with part of his shop, which stood at the side of the New Market near the Landi's bank. There I finished several pretty pieces, and made good gains, and was able to give my family much help. This roused the jealousy of the bad men among my former masters, who were called Salvadore and Michele Guasconti. In the guild of the goldsmiths they had three big

shops, and drove a thriving trade. On becoming aware of their evil will against me, I complained to certain worthy fellows, and remarked that they ought to have been satisfied with the thieveries they practised on me under the cloak of hypocritical kindness. This coming to their ears, they threatened to make me sorely repent of such words; but I, who knew not what the colour of fear was, paid them little or no heed.

XVI

It chanced one day that I was leaning against a shop of one of these men, who called out to me, and began partly reproaching, partly bullying. I answered that had they done their duty by me, I should have spoken of them what one speaks of good and worthy men; but as they had done the contrary, they ought to complain of themselves and not of me. While I was standing there and talking, one of them, named Gherardo Guasconti, their cousin, having perhaps been put up to it by them, lay in wait till a beast of burden went by.[1] It was a load of bricks. When the load reached me, Gherardo pushed it so violently on my body that I was very much hurt. Turning suddenly round and seeing him laughing, I struck him such a blow on the temple that he fell down, stunned, like one dead. Then I faced round to his cousins, and said: "That's the way to treat cowardly thieves of your sort;" and when they wanted to make a move

[1] *The Italian is apposto che passassi una soma. The verb appostare has the double meaning of lying in wait and arranging something on purpose. Cellini's words may mean, caused a beast of burden to pass by.*

upon me, trusting to their numbers, I, whose blood was now well up, laid hands to a little knife I had, and cried: "If one of you comes out of the shop, let the other run for the confessor, because the doctor will have nothing to do here." These words so frightened them that not one stirred to help their cousin. As soon as I had gone, the fathers and sons ran to the Eight, and declared that I had assaulted them in their shops with sword in hand, a thing which had never yet been seen in Florence. The magistrates had me summoned. I appeared before them; and they began to upbraid and cry out upon me—partly, I think, because they saw me in my cloak, while the others were dressed like citizens in mantle and hood;[1] but also because my adversaries had been to the houses of those magistrates, and had talked with all of them in private, while I, inexperienced in such matters, had not spoken to any of them, trusting in the goodness of my cause. I said that, having received such outrage and insult from Gherardo, and in my fury having only given him a box on the ear, I did not think I deserved such a vehement reprimand. I had hardly time to finish the word box, before Prinzivalle della Stufa,[2] who was one of the Eight, interrupted me by saying: "You gave him a blow, and not a box, on the ear." The bell was rung and we were all ordered out, when Prinzivalle spoke thus in my defence to his brother

[1] *Varchi says that a man who went about with only his cloak or cape by daytime, if he were not a soldier, was reputed an ill-liver. The Florentine citizens at this time still wore their ancient civil dress of the long gown and hood called lucco.*

[2] *This man was an ardent supporter of the Medici, and in 1510 organised a conspiracy in their favour against the Gonfalonier Soderini.*

judges: "Mark, sirs, the simplicity of this poor young man, who has accused himself of having given a box on the ear, under the impression that this is of less importance than a blow; whereas a box on the ear in the New Market carries a fine of twenty-five crowns, while a blow costs little or nothing. He is a young man of admirable talents, and supports his poor family by his labour in great abundance; I would to God that our city had plenty of this sort, instead of the present dearth of them."

XVII

Among the magistrates were some Radical fellows with turned-up hoods, who had been influenced by the entreaties and the calumnies of my opponents, because they all belonged to the party of Fra Girolamo; and these men would have had me sent to prison and punished without too close a reckoning.[1] But the good Prinzivalle put a stop to that. So they sentenced me to pay four measures of flour, which were to be given as alms to the nunnery of the Murate.[2] I was called in again; and he ordered me not to speak a word under pain of their displeasure, and to perform the sentence they had passed. Then, after giving me another sharp rebuke, they sent us to the chancellor; I muttering all the while, "It was a slap and not a blow," with which we left the

[1] *Cellini calls these magistrates arronzinati cappuccetti, a term corresponding to our Roundheads. The democratic or anti-Medicean party in Florence at that time, who adhered to the republican principles of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, distinguished themselves by wearing the long tails of their hoods twisted up and turned round their heads. Cellini shows his Medicean sympathies by using this contemptuous term, and by the honourable mention he makes of Prinzivalle della Stufa.*

[2] *A convent of closely immured nuns.*

Eight bursting with laughter. The chancellor bound us over upon bail on both sides; but only I was punished by having to pay the four measures of meal. Albeit just then I felt as though I had been massacred, I sent for one of my cousins, called Maestro Annibale, the surgeon, father of Messer Librodoro Librodori, desiring that he should go bail for me.[1] He refused to come, which made me so angry, that, fuming with fury and swelling like an asp, I took a desperate resolve. At this point one may observe how the stars do not so much sway as force our conduct. When I reflected on the great obligations which this Annibale owed my family, my rage grew to such a pitch that, turning wholly to evil, and being also by nature somewhat choleric, I waited till the magistrates had gone to dinner; and when I was alone, and observed that none of their officers were watching me, in the fire of my anger, I left the palace, ran to my shop, seized a dagger, and rushed to the house of my enemies, who were at home and shop together. I found them at table; and Gherardo, who had been the cause of the quarrel, flung himself upon me. I stabbed him in the breast, piercing doublet and jerkin through and through to the shirt, without however grazing his flesh or doing him the least harm in the world. When I felt my hand go in, and heard the clothes tear, I thought that I had killed him; and seeing him fall terror-struck to earth, I cried: "Traitors, this day is the day on which I mean to murder you

[1] *The word I have translated massacred above is assassinato. It occurs frequently in Italian of this period, and indicates the extremity of wrong and outrage.*

all." Father, mother, and sisters, thinking the last day had come, threw themselves upon their knees, screaming out for mercy with all their might; but I perceiving that they offered no resistance, and that he was stretched for dead upon the ground, thought it too base a thing to touch them. I ran storming down the staircase; and when I reached the street, I found all the rest of the household, more than twelve persons; one of them had seized an iron shovel, another a thick iron pipe, one had an anvil, some of them hammers, and some cudgels. When I got among them, raging like a mad bull, I flung four or five to the earth, and fell down with them myself, continually aiming my dagger now at one and now at another. Those who remained upright plied both hands with all their force, giving it me with hammers, cudgels, and anvil; but inasmuch as God does sometimes mercifully intervene, He so ordered that neither they nor I did any harm to one another. I only lost my cap, on which my adversaries seized, though they had run away from it before, and struck at it with all their weapons. Afterwards, they searched among their dead and wounded, and saw that not a single man was injured.

XVIII

I went off in the direction of Santa Maria Novella, and stumbling up against Fra Alessio Strozzi, whom by the way I did not know, I entreated this good friar for the love of God to save my life, since I had committed a great fault. He told me to have no

fear; for had I done every sin in the world, I was yet in perfect safety in his little cell.

After about an hour, the Eight, in an extraordinary meeting, caused one of the most dreadful bans which ever were heard of to be published against me, announcing heavy penalties against who should harbour me or know where I was, without regard to place or to the quality of my protector. My poor afflicted father went to the Eight, threw himself upon his knees, and prayed for mercy for his unfortunate young son. Thereupon one of those Radical fellows, shaking the crest of his twisted hood, stood up and addressed my father with these insulting words:[1] "Get up from there, and begone at once, for to-morrow we shall send your son into the country with the lances."[2] My poor father had still the spirit to answer: "What God shall have ordained, that will you do, and not a jot or tittle more." Whereto the same man replied that for certain God had ordained as he had spoken. My father said: "The thought consoles me that you do not know for certain;" and quitting their presence, he came to visit me, together with a young man of my own age, called Piero di Giovanni Landi—we loved one another as though we had been brothers.

Under his mantle the lad carried a first-rate sword and a splendid coat of mail; and when they found me,

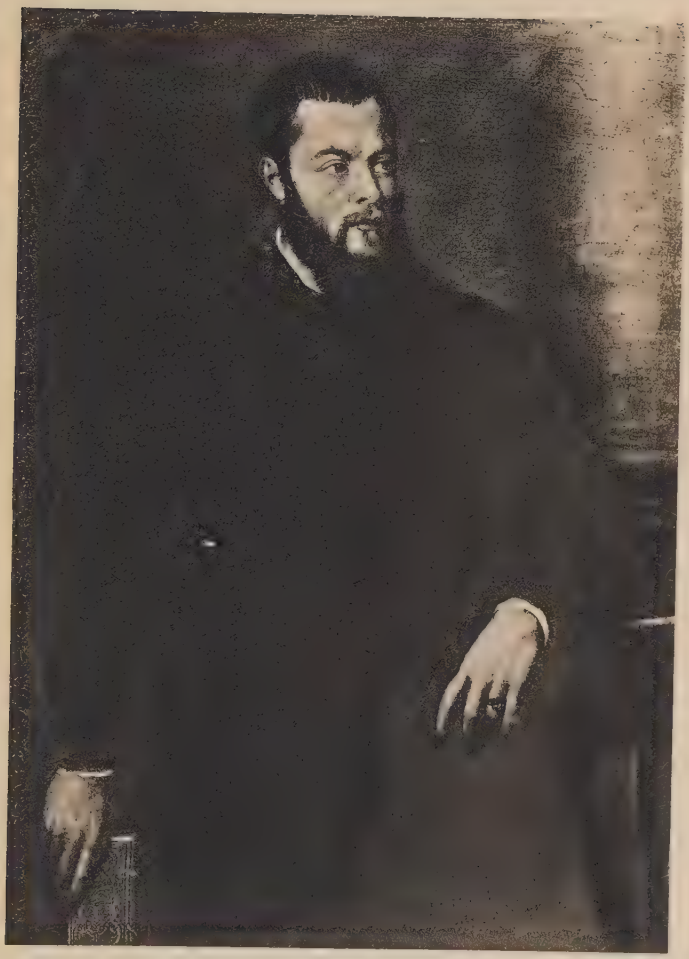
[1] *Un di quelli arrovellati scotendo la cresta dello arronzinato cappuccio. See above, p.* 108. *The democrats in Cellini's days were called at Florence Arrabbiati or Arrovellati. In the days of Savonarola this nickname had been given to the ultra-Medicean party or Palleschi.*

[2] *Lanciotti. There is some doubt about this word. But it clearly means men armed with lances, at the disposal of the Signory.*

my brave father told me what had happened, and what the magistrates had said to him. Then he kissed me on the forehead and both eyes, and gave me his hearty blessing, saying: "May the power and goodness of God be your protection;" and reaching me the sword and armour, he helped me with his own hands to put them on. Afterwards he added: "Oh, my good son, with these arms in thy hand thou shalt either live or die." Pier Landi, who was present, kept shedding tears; and when he had given me ten golden crowns, I bade him remove a few hairs from my chin, which were the first down of my manhood. Frate Alessio disguised me like a friar and gave me a lay brother to go with me.[1] Quitting the convent, and issuing from the city by the gate of Prato, I went along the walls as far as the Piazza di San Gallo. Then I ascended the slope of Montui, and in one of the first houses there I found a man called Il Grassuccio, own brother to Messer Benedetto da Monte Varchi.[2] I flung off my monk's clothes, and became once more a man. Then we mounted two horses, which were waiting there for us, and went by night to Siena. Grassuccio returned to Florence, sought out my father, and gave him the news of my safe escape. In the excess of his joy, it seemed a thousand years to my father till he should meet that member of the Eight who had insulted him; and when he came across the man, he said: "See you, Antonio, that it was God who knew

[1] *Un converso, an attendant on the monks.*

[2] *Benedetto da Monte Varchi was the celebrated poet, scholar, and historian of Florence, better known as Varchi. Another of his brothers was a physician of high repute at Florence. They continued throughout Cellini's life to live on terms of intimacy with him.*



BENEDETTO VARCHI
(TITIAN)

what had to happen to my son, and not yourself?" To which the fellow answered: "Only let him get another time into our clutches!" And my father: "I shall spend my time in thanking God that He has rescued him from that fate."

XIX

At Siena I waited for the mail to Rome, which I afterwards joined; and when we passed the Paglia, we met a courier carrying news of the new Pope, Clement VII. Upon my arrival in Rome, I went to work in the shop of the master-goldsmith Santi. He was dead; but a son of his carried on the business. He did not work himself, but entrusted all his commissions to a young man named Lucagnolo from Iesi, a country fellow, who while yet a child had come into Santi's service. This man was short but well proportioned, and was a more skilful craftsman than any one whom I had met with up to that time; remarkable for facility and excellent in design. He executed large plate only; that is to say, vases of the utmost beauty, basons, and such pieces.[1] Having put myself to work there, I began to make some candelabra for the Bishop of Salamanca, a Spaniard.[2] They were richly chased, so far as that sort of work admits. A pupil of Raffaello da Urbino called Gian Francesco, and commonly known as Il Fattore, was a painter of great ability; and being on terms of friendship with the Bishop, he introduced me to his favour,

[1] *Cellini calls this grosseria.*

[2] *Don Francesco de Bobadilla. He came to Rome in* 1517, *was shut up with Clement in the Castle of S. Angelo in* 1527, *and died in* 1529, *after his return to Spain.*

so that I obtained many commissions from that prelate, and earned considerable sums of money.[1]

During that time I went to draw, sometimes in Michel Agnolo's chapel, and sometimes in the house of Agostino Chigi of Siena, which contained many incomparable paintings by the hand of that great master Raffaello.[2] This I did on feast-days, because the house was then inhabited by Messer Gismondo, Agostino's brother. They plumed themselves exceedingly when they saw young men of my sort coming to study in their palaces. Gismondo's wife, noticing my frequent presence in that house—she was a lady as courteous as could be, and of surpassing beauty—came up to me one day, looked at my drawings, and asked me if I was a sculptor or a painter; to whom I said I was a goldsmith. She remarked that I drew too well for a goldsmith; and having made one of her waiting-maids bring a lily of the finest diamonds set in gold, she showed it to me, and bade me value it. I valued it at 800 crowns. Then she said that I had very nearly hit the mark, and asked me whether I felt capable of setting the stones really well. I said that I should much like to do so, and began before her eyes to make a little sketch for it, working all the better because of the pleasure I took in conversing with so lovely and agreeable a gentlewoman. When the sketch was finished, another

[1] *This painter, Gio. Francesco Penni, surnamed Il Fattore, aided Raphael in his Roman frescoes and was much beloved by him. Together with Giulio Romano he completed the imperfect Stanze of the Vatican.*

[2] *Cellini here alludes to the Sistine Chapel and to the Villa Farnesina in Trastevere, built by the Sienese banker, Agostino Chigi. It was here that Raphael painted his Galatea and the whole fable of Cupid and Psyche.*

Roman lady of great beauty joined us; she had been above, and now descending to the ground-floor, asked Madonna Porzia what she was doing there. She answered with a smile: "I am amusing myself by watching this worthy young man at his drawing; he is as good as he is handsome." I had by this time acquired a trifle of assurance, mixed, however, with some honest bashfulness; so I blushed and said: "Such as I am, lady, I shall ever be most ready to serve you." The gentlewoman, also slightly blushing, said: "You know well that I want you to serve me;" and reaching me the lily, told me to take it away; and gave me besides twenty golden crowns which she had in her bag, and added: "Set me the jewel after the fashion you have sketched, and keep for me the old gold in which it is now set." On this the Roman lady observed: "If I were in that young man's body, I should go off without asking leave." Madonna Porzia replied that virtues rarely are at home with vices, and that if I did such a thing, I should strongly belie my good looks of an honest man. Then turning round, she took the Roman lady's hand, and with a pleasant smile said: "Farewell, Benvenuto." I stayed on a short while at the drawing I was making, which was a copy of a Jove by Raffaello. When I had finished it and left the house, I set myself to making a little model of wax, in order to show how the jewel would look when it was completed. This I took to Madonna Porzia, whom I found with the same Roman lady. Both of them were highly satisfied with my work, and treated me so kindly that, being somewhat emboldened, I promised the jewel

should be twice as good as the model. Accordingly I set hand to it, and in twelve days I finished it in the form of a fleur-de-lys, as I have said above, ornamenting it with little masks, children, and animals, exquisitely enamelled, whereby the diamonds which formed the lily were more than doubled in effect.

XX

While I was working at this piece, Lucagnolo, of whose ability I have before spoken, showed considerable discontent, telling me over and over again that I might acquire far more profit and honour by helping him to execute large plate, as I had done at first. I made him answer that, whenever I chose, I should always be capable of working at great silver pieces; but that things like that on which I was now engaged were not commissioned every day; and beside their bringing no less honour than large silver plate, there was also more profit to be made by them. He laughed me in the face, and said: "Wait and see, Benvenuto; for by the time that you have finished that work of yours, I will make haste to have finished this vase, which I took in hand when you did the jewel; and then experience shall teach you what profit I shall get from my vase, and what you will get from your ornament." I answered that I was very glad indeed to enter into such a competition with so good a craftsman as he was, because the end would show which of us was mistaken. Accordingly both the one and the other of us, with a scornful smile upon our lips, bent our heads in grim ear-

nest to the work, which both were now desirous of accomplishing; so that after about ten days, each had finished his undertaking with great delicacy and artistic skill.

Lucagnolo's was a huge silver piece, used at the table of Pope Clement, into which he flung away bits of bone and the rind of divers fruits, while eating; an object of ostentation rather than necessity. The vase was adorned with two fine handles, together with many masks, both small and great, and masses of lovely foliage, in as exquisite a style of elegance as could be imagined; on seeing which I said it was the most beautiful vase that ever I set eyes on. Thinking he had convinced me, Lucagnolo replied: "Your work seems to me no less beautiful, but we shall soon perceive the difference between the two." So he took his vase and carried it to the Pope, who was very well pleased with it, and ordered at once that he should be paid at the ordinary rate of such large plate. Meanwhile I carried mine to Madonna Porzia, who looked at it with astonishment, and told me I had far surpassed my promise. Then she bade me ask for my reward whatever I liked; for it seemed to her my desert was so great that if I craved a castle she could hardly recompense me; but since that was not in her hands to bestow, she added laughing that I must beg what lay within her power. I answered that the greatest reward I could desire for my labour was to have satisfied her ladyship. Then, smiling in my turn, and bowing to her, I took my leave, saying I wanted no reward but that. She

turned to the Roman lady and said: "You see that the qualities we discerned in him are companied by virtues, and not vices." They both expressed their admiration, and then Madonna Porzia continued: "Friend Benvenuto, have you never heard it said that when the poor give to the rich, the devil laughs?" I replied: "Quite true! and yet, in the midst of all his troubles, I should like this time to see him laugh;" and as I took my leave, she said that this time she had no will to bestow on him that favour.

When I came back to the shop, Lucagnolo had the money for his vase in a paper packet; and on my arrival he cried out: "Come and compare the price of your jewel with the price of my plate." I said that he must leave things as they were till the next day, because I hoped that even as my work in its kind was not less excellent than his, so I should be able to show him quite an equal price for it.

XXI

On the day following, Madonna Porzia sent a major-domo of hers to my shop, who called me out, and putting into my hands a paper packet full of money from his lady, told me that she did not choose the devil should have his whole laugh out: by which she hinted that the money sent me was not the entire payment merited by my industry, and other messages were added worthy of so courteous a lady. Lucagnolo, who was burning to compare his packet with mine, burst into the shop; then in

the presence of twelve journeymen and some neighbours, eager to behold the result of this competition, he seized his packet, scornfully exclaiming "Ou! ou!" three or four times, while he poured his money on the counter with a great noise. They were twenty-five crowns in giulios; and he fancied that mine would be four or five crowns *di moneta*.[1] I for my part, stunned and stifled by his cries, and by the looks and smiles of the bystanders, first peeped into my packet; then, after seeing that it contained nothing but gold, I retired to one end of the counter, and, keeping my eyes lowered and making no noise at all, I lifted it with both hands suddenly above my head, and emptied it like a mill hopper.[2] My coin was twice as much as his; which caused the onlookers, who had fixed their eyes on me with some derision, to turn round suddenly to him and say: "Lucagnolo, Benvenuto's pieces, being all of gold and twice as many as yours, make a far finer effect." I thought for certain that, what with jealousy and what with shame, Lucagnolo would have fallen dead upon the spot; and though he took the third part of my gain, since I was a journeyman (for such is the custom of the trade, two-thirds fall to the workman and one-third to the masters of the shop), yet inconsiderate envy had more power in him than avarice: it ought indeed to have worked quite

[1] *Scudi di giuli and scudi di moneta. The giulio was a silver coin worth* 56 *Italian centimes. The scudi di moneta was worth* 10 *giulios. Cellini was paid in golden crowns, which had a much higher value. The scudo and the ducato at this epoch were reckoned at* 7 *lire, the lira at* 20 *soldi.*

[2] *The packet was funnel-shaped, and Cellini poured the coins out from the broad end.*

the other way, he being a peasant's son from Iesi. He cursed his art and those who taught it him, vowing that thenceforth he would never work at large plate, but give his whole attention to those whoreson gewgaws, since they were so well paid. Equally enraged on my side, I answered that every bird sang its own note; that he talked after the fashion of the hovels he came from; but that I dared swear that I should succeed with ease in making his lubberly lumber, while he would never be successful in my whoreson gewgaws.[1] Thus I flung off in a passion, telling him that I would soon show him that I spoke truth. The bystanders openly declared against him, holding him for a lout, as indeed he was, and me for a man, as I had proved myself.

XXII

Next day, I went to thank Madonna Porzia, and told her that her ladyship had done the opposite of what she said she would; for that while I wanted to make the devil laugh, she had made him once more deny God. We both laughed pleasantly at this, and she gave me other commissions for fine and substantial work.

Meanwhile, I contrived, by means of a pupil of Raffaello da Urbino, to get an order from the Bishop of Salamanca for one of those great water-vessels called *acquereccia*, which are used for ornaments to place on sideboards. He wanted a pair made of equal size; and one of them he intrusted to Lucagnolo, the other to me. Giovan Francesco, the painter I

[1] *The two slang phrases translated above are bordellerie and coglionerie.*

have mentioned, gave us the design.[1] Accordingly I set hand with marvellous good-will to this piece of plate, and was accommodated with a part of his workshop by a Milanese named Maestro Giovan Piero della Tacca. Having made my preparations, I calculated how much money I should need for certain affairs of my own, and sent all the rest to assist my poor father.

It so happened that just when this was being paid to him in Florence, he stumbled upon one of those Radicals who were in the Eight at the time when I got into that little trouble there. It was the very man who had abused him so rudely, and who swore that I should certainly be sent into the country with the lances. Now this fellow had some sons of very bad morals and repute; wherefore my father said to him: "Misfortunes can happen to anybody, especially to men of choleric humour when they are in the right, even as it happened to my son; but let the rest of his life bear witness how virtuously I have brought him up. Would God, for your well-being, that your sons may act neither worse nor better toward you than mine do to me. God rendered me able to bring them up as I have done; and where my own power could not reach, 'twas He who rescued them, against your expectation, out of your violent hands." On leaving the man, he wrote me all this story, begging me for God's sake to practise music at times, in order that I might not lose the fine accomplishment which he had taught me with such trouble. The letter so overflowed with expressions of the tenderest fatherly

[1] *That is, Il Fattore. See above, p.* 114.

affection, that I was moved to tears of filial piety, resolving, before he died, to gratify him amply with regard to music. Thus God grants us those lawful blessings which we ask in prayer, nothing doubting.

XXIII

While I was pushing forward Salamanca's vase, I had only one little boy as help, whom I had taken at the entreaty of friends, and half against my own will, to be my workman. He was about fourteen years of age, bore the name of Paulino, and was son to a Roman burgess, who lived upon the income of his property. Paulino was the best-mannered, the most honest, and the most beautiful boy I ever saw in my whole life. His modest ways and actions, together with his superlative beauty and his devotion to myself, bred in me as great an affection for him as a man's breast can hold. This passionate love led me oftentimes to delight the lad with music; for I observed that his marvellous features, which by complexion wore a tone of modest melancholy, brightened up, and when I took my cornet, broke into a smile so lovely and so sweet, that I do not marvel at the silly stories which the Greeks have written about the deities of heaven. Indeed, if my boy had lived in those times, he would probably have turned their heads still more.[1] He had a sister named Faustina, more beautiful, I verily believe, than that Faustina about whom the old books gossip so. Sometimes he took me to their vineyard, and, so far as I could

[1] *Gli Arebbe fatti più uscire de' gangheri*; *would have taken them still more off the hinges.*

judge, it struck me that Paulino's good father would have welcomed me as a son-in-law. This affair led me to play more than I was used to do.

It happened at that time that one Giangiacomo of Cesena, a musician in the Pope's band, and a very excellent performer, sent word through Lorenzo, the trumpeter of Lucca, who is now in our Duke's service, to inquire whether I was inclined to help them at the Pope's Ferragosto, playing soprano with my cornet in some motets of great beauty selected by them for that occasion.[1] Although I had the greatest desire to finish the vase I had begun, yet, since music has a wondrous charm of its own, and also because I wished to please my old father, I consented to join them. During eight days before the festival we practised two hours a day together; then on the first of August we went to the Belvedere, and while Pope Clement was at table, we played those carefully studied motets so well that his Holiness protested he had never heard music more sweetly executed or with better harmony of parts. He sent for Giangiacomo, and asked him where and how he had procured so excellent a cornet for soprano, and inquired particularly who I was. Giangiacomo told him my name in full. Whereupon the Pope said: "So, then, he is the son of Maestro Giovanni?" On being assured I was, the Pope expressed his wish to have me in his service with the other bandsmen. Giangiacomo replied: "Most blessed Father, I cannot pretend for certain that you will get him, for his profession, to which he

[1] *The Ferragosto or Feriæ Augusti was a festival upon the first of August.*

devotes himself assiduously, is that of a goldsmith, and he works in it miraculously well, and earns by it far more than he could do by playing." To this the Pope added: "I am the better inclined to him now that I find him possessor of a talent more than I expected. See that he obtains the same salary as the rest of you; and tell him from me to join my service, and that I will find work enough by the day for him to do in his other trade." Then stretching out his hand, he gave him a hundred golden crowns of the Camera in a handkerchief, and said:[1] "Divide these so that he may take his share."

When Giangiacomo left the Pope, he came to us, and related in detail all that the Pope had said; and after dividing the money between the eight of us, and giving me my share, he said to me: "Now I am going to have you inscribed among our company." I replied: "Let the day pass; to-morrow I will give my answer." When I left them, I went meditating whether I ought to accept the invitation, inasmuch as I could not but suffer if I abandoned the noble studies of my art. The following night my father appeared to me in a dream, and begged me with tears of tenderest affection, for God's love and his, to enter upon this engagement. Methought I answered that nothing would induce me to do so. In an instant he assumed so horrible an aspect as to frighten me out of my wits, and cried: "If you do not, you will have a father's curse; but if you do, may you be ever blessed by me!" When I woke, I ran, for very fright, to have myself inscribed. Then I wrote to my

[1] *The Camera Apostolica was the Roman Exchequer.*

old father, telling him the news, which so affected him with extreme joy that a sudden fit of illness took him, and well-nigh brought him to death's door. In his answer to my letter, he told me that he too had dreamed nearly the same as I had.

XXIV

Knowing now that I had gratified my father's honest wish, I began to think that everything would prosper with me to a glorious and honourable end. Accordingly, I set myself with indefatigable industry to the completion of the vase I had begun for Salamanca. That prelate was a very extraordinary man, extremely rich, but difficult to please. He sent daily to learn what I was doing; and when his messenger did not find me at home, he broke into fury, saying that he would take the work out of my hands and give it to others to finish. This came of my slavery to that accursed music. Still I laboured diligently night and day, until, when I had brought my work to a point when it could be exhibited, I submitted it to the inspection of the Bishop. This so increased his desire to see it finished, that I was sorry I had shown it. At the end of three months I had it ready, with little animals and foliage and masks, as beautiful as one could hope to see. No sooner was it done than I sent it by the hand of my workman, Paulino, to show that able artist Lucagnolo, of whom I have spoken above. Paulino, with the grace and beauty which belonged to him, spoke as follows: "Messer Lucagnolo, Benvenuto bids me say that he has sent to show you his promises and your lumber,

expecting in return to see from you his gewgaws." This message given, Lucagnolo took up the vase, and carefully examined it; then he said to Paulino: "Fair boy, tell your master that he is a great and able artist, and that I beg him to be willing to have me for a friend, and not to engage in aught else." The mission of that virtuous and marvellous lad caused me the greatest joy; and then the vase was carried to Salamanca, who ordered it to be valued. Lucagnolo took part in the valuation, estimating and praising it far above my own opinion. Salamanca, lifting up the vase, cried like a true Spaniard: "I swear by God that I will take as long in paying him as he has lagged in making it." When I heard this, I was exceedingly put out, and fell to cursing all Spain and every one who wished well to it.

Amongst other beautiful ornaments, this vase had a handle, made all of one piece, with most delicate mechanism, which, when a spring was touched, stood upright above the mouth of it. While the prelate was one day ostentatiously exhibiting my vase to certain Spanish gentlemen of his suite, it chanced that one of them, upon Monsignor's quitting the room, began roughly to work the handle, and as the gentle spring which moved it could not bear his loutish violence, it broke in his hand. Aware what mischief he had done, he begged the butler who had charge of the Bishop's plate to take it to the master who had made it, for him to mend, and promised to pay what price he asked, provided it was set to rights at once. So the vase came once more into my hands, and I promised to put it forthwith in

order, which indeed I did. It was brought to me before dinner; and at twenty-two o'clock the man who brought it returned, all in a sweat, for he had run the whole way, Monsignor having again asked for it to show to certain other gentlemen.[1] The butler, then, without giving me time to utter a word, cried: "Quick, quick, bring the vase." I, who wanted to act at leisure and not to give it up to him, said that I did not mean to be so quick. The serving-man got into such a rage that he made as though he would put one hand to his sword, while with the other he threatened to break the shop open. To this I put a stop at once with my own weapon, using therewith spirited language, and saying: "I am not going to give it to you! Go and tell Monsignor, your master, that I want the money for my work before I let it leave this shop." When the fellow saw he could not obtain it by swaggering, he fell to praying me, as one prays to the Cross, declaring that if I would only give it up, he would take care I should be paid. These words did not make me swerve from my purpose; but I kept on saying the same thing. At last, despairing of success, he swore to come with Spaniards enough to cut me in pieces. Then he took to his heels; while I, who inclined to believe partly in their murderous attack, resolved that I would defend myself with courage. So I got an admirable

[1] *The Italians reckoned time from sundown till sundown, counting twenty-four hours. Twenty-two o'clock was therefore two hours before nightfall. One hour of the night was one hour after nightfall, and so forth. By this system of reckoning, it is clear that the hours varied with the season of the year; and unless we know the exact month in which an event took place, we cannot translate any hour into terms of our own system.*

little gun ready, which I used for shooting game, and muttered to myself: "He who robs me of my property and labour may take my life too, and welcome." While I was carrying on this debate in my own mind, a crowd of Spaniards arrived, led by their major-domo, who, with the headstrong rashness of his race, bade them go in and take the vase and give me a good beating. Hearing these words, I showed them the muzzle of my gun, and prepared to fire, and cried in a loud voice: "Renegade Jews, traitors, is it thus that one breaks into houses and shops in our city of Rome? Come as many of you thieves as like, an inch nearer to this wicket, and I'll blow all their brains out with my gun." Then I turned the muzzle toward their major-domo, and making as though I would discharge it, called out: "And you big thief, who are egging them on, I mean to kill you first." He clapped spurs to the jennet he was riding, and took flight headlong. The commotion we were making stirred up all the neighbours, who came crowding round, together with some Roman gentlemen who chanced to pass, and cried: "Do but kill the renegades, and we will stand by you." These words had the effect of frightening the Spaniards in good earnest. They withdrew, and were compelled by the circumstances to relate the whole affair to Monsignor. Being a man of inordinate haughtiness, he rated the members of his household, both because they had engaged in such an act of violence, and also because, having begun, they had not gone through with it. At this juncture the painter, who had been concerned in the whole matter, came in,

and the Bishop bade him go and tell me that if I did not bring the vase at once, he would make mince-meat of me;[1] but if I brought it, he would pay its price down. These threats were so far from terrifying me, that I sent him word I was going immediately to lay my case before the Pope.

In the meantime, his anger and my fear subsided; whereupon, being guaranteed by some Roman noblemen of high degree that the prelate would not harm me, and having assurance that I should be paid, I armed myself with a large poniard and my good coat of mail, and betook myself to his palace, where he had drawn up all his household. I entered, and Paulino followed with the silver vase. It was just like passing through the Zodiac, neither more nor less; for one of them had the face of the lion, another of the scorpion, a third of the crab. However, we passed onward to the presence of the rascally priest, who spouted out a torrent of such language as only priests and Spaniards have at their command. In return I never raised my eyes to look at him, nor answered word for word. That seemed to augment the fury of his anger; and causing paper to be put before me, he commanded me to write an acknowledgment to the effect that I had been amply satisfied and paid in full. Then I raised my head, and said I should be very glad to do so when I had received the money. The Bishop's rage continued to rise; threats and recriminations were flung about; but at last the money was paid, and I wrote the receipt. Then I departed, glad at heart and in high spirits.

[1] *Lit.* "*the largest piece left of me should be my ears.*"

XXV

When Pope Clement heard the story—he had seen the vase before, but it was not shown him as my work—he expressed much pleasure and spoke warmly in my praise, publicly saying that he felt very favourably toward me. This caused Monsignor Salamanca to repent that he had hectored over me; and in order to make up our quarrel, he sent the same painter to inform me that he meant to give me large commissions. I replied that I was willing to undertake them, but that I should require to be paid in advance. This speech too came to Pope Clement's ears, and made him laugh heartily. Cardinal Cibo was in the presence, and the Pope narrated to him the whole history of my dispute with the Bishop.[1] Then he turned to one of his people, and ordered him to go on supplying me with work for the palace. Cardinal Cibo sent for me, and after some time spent in agreeable conversation, gave me the order for a large vase, bigger than Salamanca's. I likewise obtained commissions from Cardinal Cornaro, and many others of the Holy College, especially Ridolfi and Salviati; they all kept me well employed, so that I earned plenty of money.[2]

Madonna Porzia now advised me to open a shop of my own. This I did; and I never stopped work-

[1] *Innocenzio Cibo Malaspina, Archbishop of Genoa, and nephew of Lorenzo de' Medici. He was a prelate of vast wealth and a great patron of arts and letters.*

[2] *Marco Cornaro was a brother of Caterina, the Queen of Cyprus. He obtained the hat in* 1492. *Niccolò Ridolfi was a nephew of Leo X. Giovanni Salviati, the son of Jacopo mentioned above, p.* 84, *was also a nephew of Leo X., who gave him the hat in* 1517.

POPE CLEMENT VII
(SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO)

ing for that excellent and gentle lady, who paid me exceedingly well, and by whose means perhaps it was that I came to make a figure in the world.

I contracted close friendship with Signor Gabbriello Ceserino, at that time Gonfalonier of Rome, and executed many pieces for him. One, among the rest, is worthy of mention. It was a large golden medal to wear in the hat. I engraved upon it Leda with her swan; and being very well pleased with the workmanship, he said he should like to have it valued, in order that I might be properly paid. Now, since the medal was executed with consummate skill, the valuers of the trade set a far higher price on it than he had thought of. I therefore kept the medal, and got nothing for my pains. The same sort of adventures happened in this case as in that of Salamanca's vase. But I shall pass such matters briefly by, lest they hinder me from telling things of greater importance.

## XXVI

Since I am writing my life, I must from time to time diverge from my profession in order to describe with brevity, if not in detail, some incidents which have no bearing on my career as artist. On the morning of St. John's Day I happened to be dining with several men of our nation, painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, amongst the most notable of whom was Rosso and Gianfrancesco, the pupil of Raffaello.[1] I had invited them without restraint or

[1] *St. John's Day was the great Florentine Festival, on which all the Guilds went in procession with pageants through the city. Of the Florentine painter, Il Rosso,*

ceremony to the place of our meeting; and they were all laughing and joking, as is natural when a crowd of men come together to make merry on so great a festival. It chanced that a light-brained swaggering young fellow passed by; he was a soldier of Rienzo da Ceri, who, when he heard the noise that we were making, gave vent to a string of opprobrious sarcasms upon the folk of Florence.[1] I, who was the host of those great artists and men of worth, taking the insult to myself, slipped out quietly without being observed, and went up to him. I ought to say that he had a punk of his there, and was going on with his stupid ribaldries to amuse her. When I met him, I asked if he was the rash fellow who was speaking evil of the Florentines. He answered at once: "I am that man." On this I raised my hand, struck him in the face, and said: "And I am *this* man." Then we each of us drew our swords with spirit; but the fray had hardly begun when a crowd of persons intervened, who rather took my part than not, hearing and seeing that I was in the right.

On the following day a challenge to fight with him was brought me, which I accepted very gladly, saying that I expected to complete this job far quicker than those of the other art I practised. So I went at once to confer with a fine old man called Bevilacqua,

*or Maitre Roux, this is the first mention by Cellini. He went to France in* 1534, *and died an obscure death there in* 1541.

[1] *This Rienzo, Renzo, or Lorenzo da Ceri, was a captain of adventurers or Condottiere, who hired his mercenary forces to paymasters. He defended Crema for the Venetians in* 1514, *and conquered Urbino for the Pope in* 1515. *Afterwards he fought for the French in the Italian wars. We shall hear more of him again during the sack of Rome.*

who was reputed to have been the first sword of Italy, because he had fought more than twenty serious duels and had always come off with honour. This excellent man was a great friend of mine; he knew me as an artist, and had also been concerned as intermediary in certain ugly quarrels between me and others. Accordingly, when he had learned my business, he answered with a smile: "My Benvenuto, if you had an affair with Mars, I am sure you would come out with honour, because through all the years that I have known you, I have never seen you wrongfully take up a quarrel." So he consented to be my second, and we repaired with sword in hand to the appointed place; but no blood was shed, for my opponent made the matter up, and I came with much credit out of the affair.[1] I will not add further particulars; for though they would be very interesting in their own way, I wish to keep both space and words for my art, which has been my chief inducement to write as I am doing, and about which I shall have only too much to say.

The spirit of honourable rivalry impelled me to attempt some other masterpiece, which should equal, or even surpass, the productions of that able craftsman, Lucagnolo, whom I have mentioned. Still I did not on this account neglect my own fine art of jewellery; and so both the one and the other wrought me much profit and more credit, and in both of them I continued to produce things of marked originality. There was at that time in Rome a very able artist

[1] *The Italian, restando dal mio avversario, seems to mean that Cellini's opponent proposed an accommodation, apologised, or stayed the duel at a certain point.*

of Perugia named Lautizio, who worked only in one department, where he was sole and unrivalled throughout the world.[1] You must know that at Rome every cardinal has a seal, upon which his title is engraved, and these seals are made just as large as a child's hand of about twelve years of age; and, as I have already said, the cardinal's title is engraved upon the seal together with a great many ornamental figures. A well-made article of the kind fetches a hundred, or more than a hundred crowns. This excellent workman, like Lucagnolo, roused in me some honest rivalry, although the art he practised is far remote from the other branches of goldsmithery, and consequently Lautizio was not skilled in making anything but seals. I gave my mind to acquiring his craft also, although I found it very difficult; and, unrepelled by the trouble which it gave me, I went on zealously upon the path of profit and improvement.

There was in Rome another most excellent craftsman of ability, who was a Milanese named Messer Caradosso.[2] He dealt in nothing but little chiselled medals, made of plates of metal, and such-like things. I have seen of his some paxes in half relief, and some Christs a palm in length wrought of the thinnest golden plates, so exquisitely done that I esteemed him the greatest master in that kind I had ever seen, and envied him more than all the rest together. There were also other masters who worked at med-

[1] *See Cellini's Treatise Oreficeria, cap. vi., for more particulars about this artist.*

[2] *His real name was Ambrogio Foppa. The nickname Caradosso is said to have stuck to him in consequence of a Spaniard calling him Bear's-face in his own tongue. He struck Leo X.'s coins; and we possess some excellent medallion portraits by his hand.*

als carved in steel, which may be called the models and true guides for those who aim at striking coins in the most perfect style. All these divers arts I set myself with unflagging industry to learn.

I must not omit the exquisite art of enamelling, in which I have never known any one excel save a Florentine, our countryman, called Amerigo.[1] I did not know him, but was well acquainted with his incomparable masterpieces. Nothing in any part of the world or by any craftsman that I have seen, approached the divine beauty of their workmanship. To this branch too I devoted myself with all my strength, although it is extremely difficult, chiefly because of the fire, which, after long time and trouble spent in other processes, has to be applied at last, and not unfrequently brings the whole to ruin. In spite of its great difficulties, it gave me so much pleasure that I looked upon them as recreation; and this came from the special gift which the God of nature bestowed on me, that is to say, a temperament so happy and of such excellent parts that I was freely able to accomplish whatever it pleased me to take in hand. The various departments of art which I have described are very different one from the other, so that a man who excels in one of them, if he undertakes the others, hardly ever achieves the same success; whereas I strove with all my power to become equally versed in all of them: and in the proper place I shall demonstrate that I attained my object.

[1] *For him, consult Cellini's Oreficeria.*

XXVII

At that time, while I was still a young man of about twenty-three, there raged a plague of such extraordinary violence that many thousands died of it every day in Rome. Somewhat terrified at this calamity, I began to take certain amusements, as my mind suggested, and for a reason which I will presently relate. I had formed a habit of going on feast-days to the ancient buildings, and copying parts of them in wax or with the pencil; and since these buildings are all ruins, and the ruins house innumerable pigeons, it came into my head to use my gun against these birds. So then, avoiding all commerce with people, in my terror of the plague, I used to put a fowling-piece on my boy Pagolino's shoulder, and he and I went out alone into the ruins; and oftentimes we came home laden with a cargo of the fattest pigeons. I did not care to charge my gun with more than a single ball; and thus it was by pure skill in the art that I filled such heavy bags. I had a fowling-piece which I had made myself; inside and out it was as bright as any mirror. I also used to make a very fine sort of powder, in doing which I discovered secret processes, beyond any which have yet been found; and on this point, in order to be brief, I will give but one particular, which will astonish good shots of every degree. This is, that when I charged my gun with powder weighing one-fifth of the ball, it carried two hundred paces point-blank. It is true that the great delight I took in this exercise bid fair to withdraw me from my art and studies; yet in another way it gave

me more than it deprived me of, seeing that each time I went out shooting I returned with greatly better health, because the open air was a benefit to my constitution. My natural temperament was melancholy, and while I was taking these amusements, my heart leapt up with joy, and I found that I could work better and with far greater mastery than when I spent my whole time in study and manual labour. In this way my gun, at the end of the game, stood me more in profit than in loss.

It was also the cause of my making acquaintance with certain hunters after curiosities, who followed in the track[1] of those Lombard peasants who used to come to Rome to till the vineyards at the proper season. While digging the ground, they frequently turned up antique medals, agates, chrysoprases, cornelians, and cameos; also sometimes jewels, as, for instance, emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, and rubies. The peasants used to sell things of this sort to the traders for a mere trifle; and I very often, when I met them, paid the latter several times as many golden crowns as they had given giulios for some object. Independently of the profit I made by this traffic, which was at least tenfold, it brought me also into agreeable relations with nearly all the cardinals of Rome. I will only touch upon a few of the most notable and rarest of these curiosities. There came into my hands, among many other fragments, the head of a dolphin about as big as a good-sized ballot-bean. Not only was the style of this head extremely beautiful, but nature had here far sur-

[1] *Stavano alle velette. Perhaps lay in wait for.*

passed art; for the stone was an emerald of such good colour, that the man who bought it from me for tens of crowns sold it again for hundreds after setting it as a finger-ring. I will mention another kind of gem; this was a magnificent topaz; and here art equalled nature; it was as large as a big hazel-nut, with the head of Minerva in a style of inconceivable beauty. I remember yet another precious stone, different from these; it was a cameo, engraved with Hercules binding Cerberus of the triple throat; such was its beauty and the skill of its workmanship, that our great Michel Agnolo protested he had never seen anything so wonderful. Among many bronze medals, I obtained one upon which was a head of Jupiter. It was the largest that had ever been seen; the head of the most perfect execution; and it had on the reverse side a very fine design of some little figures in the same style. I might enlarge at great length on this curiosity; but I will refrain for fear of being prolix.

### XXVIII

As I have said above, the plague had broken out in Rome; but though I must return a little way upon my steps, I shall not therefore abandon the main path of my history. There arrived in Rome a surgeon of the highest renown, who was called Maestro Giacomo da Carpi.[1] This able man, in the course of his other practice, undertook the most desperate

[1] *Giacomo Berengario da Carpi was, in fact, a great physician, surgeon, and student of anatomy. He is said to have been the first to use mercury in the cure of syphilis, a disease which was devastating Italy after the year* 1495. *He amassed*

cases of the so-called French disease. In Rome this kind of illness is very partial to the priests, and especially to the richest of them. When, therefore, Maestro Giacomo had made his talents known, he professed to work miracles in the treatment of such cases by means of certain fumigations; but he only undertook a cure after stipulating for his fees, which he reckoned not by tens, but by hundreds of crowns. He was a great connoisseur in the arts of design. Chancing to pass one day before my shop, he saw a lot of drawings which I had laid upon the counter, and among these were several designs for little vases in a capricious style, which I had sketched for my amusement. These vases were in quite a different fashion from any which had been seen up to that date. He was anxious that I should finish one or two of them for him in silver; and this I did with the fullest satisfaction, seeing they exactly suited my own fancy. The clever surgeon paid me very well, and yet the honour which the vases brought me was worth a hundred times as much; for the best craftsmen in the goldsmith's trade declared they had never seen anything more beautiful or better executed.

No sooner had I finished them than he showed them to the Pope; and the next day following he betook himself away from Rome. He was a man of much learning, who used to discourse wonderfully about medicine. The Pope would fain have had him in his service, but he replied that he would not take service with anybody in the world, and that whoso

*a large fortune, which, when he died at Ferrara about* 1530, *he bequeathed to the Duke there.*

had need of him might come to seek him out. He was a person of great sagacity, and did wisely to get out of Rome; for not many months afterwards, all the patients he had treated grew so ill that they were a hundred times worse off than before he came. He would certainly have been murdered if he had stopped. He showed my little vases to several persons of quality; amongst others, to the most excellent Duke of Ferrara, and pretended that he had got them from a great lord in Rome, by telling this nobleman that if he wanted to be cured, he must give him those two vases; and that the lord had answered that they were antique, and besought him to ask for anything else which it might be convenient for him to give, provided only he would leave him those; but, according to his own account, Maestro Giacomo made as though he would not undertake the cure, and so he got them.

I was told this by Messer Alberto Bendedio in Ferrara, who with great ostentation showed me some earthenware copies he possessed of them.[1] Thereupon I laughed, and as I said nothing, Messer Alberto Bendedio, who was a haughty man, flew into a rage and said: "You are laughing at them, are you? And I tell you that during the last thousand years there has not been born a man capable of so much as copying them." I then, not caring to deprive them of so eminent a reputation, kept silence, and admired them with mute stupefaction. It was said to me in Rome by many great lords, some of whom were my friends, that the work of which I

[1] *See Book II. Chap. viii., for a full account of this incident at Ferrara.*

have been speaking was, in their opinion, of marvellous excellence and genuine antiquity; whereupon, emboldened by their praises, I revealed that I had made them. As they would not believe it, and as I wished to prove that I had spoken truth, I was obliged to bring evidence and to make new drawings of the vases; for my word alone was not enough, inasmuch as Maestro Giacomo had cunningly insisted upon carrying off the old drawings with him. By this little job I earned a fair amount of money.

XXIX

The plague went dragging on for many months, but I had as yet managed to keep it at bay; for though several of my comrades were dead, I survived in health and freedom. Now it chanced one evening that an intimate comrade of mine brought home to supper a Bolognese prostitute named Faustina. She was a very fine woman, but about thirty years of age; and she had with her a little serving-girl of thirteen or fourteen. Faustina belonging to my friend, I would not have touched her for all the gold in the world; and though she declared she was madly in love with me, I remained steadfast in my loyalty. But after they had gone to bed, I stole away the little serving-girl, who was quite a fresh maid, and woe to her if her mistress had known of it! The result was that I enjoyed a very pleasant night, far more to my satisfaction than if I had passed it with Faustina. I rose upon the hour of breaking fast, and felt tired, for I had travelled many miles that night, and was wanting to take food, when a crush-

ing headache seized me; several boils appeared on my left arm, together with a carbuncle which showed itself just beyond the palm of the left hand where it joins the wrist. Everybody in the house was in a panic; my friend, the cow and the calf, all fled. Left alone there with my poor little prentice, who refused to abandon me, I felt stifled at the heart, and made up my mind for certain I was a dead man.

Just then the father of the lad went by, who was physician to the Cardinal Iacoacci,[1] and lived as member of that prelate's household.[2] The boy called out: "Come, father, and see Benvenuto; he is in bed with some trifling indisposition." Without thinking what my complaint might be, the doctor came up at once, and when he had felt my pulse, he saw and felt what was very contrary to his own wishes. Turning round to his son, he said: "O traitor of a child, you 've ruined me; how can I venture now into the Cardinal's presence?" His son made answer: "Why, father, this man my master is worth far more than all the cardinals in Rome." Then the doctor turned to me and said: "Since I am here, I will consent to treat you. But of one thing only I warn you, that if you have enjoyed a woman, you are doomed." To this I replied: "I did so this very night." He answered: "With whom, and to what extent?"[3] I said: "Last night, and with a girl in her earliest maturity." Upon this, perceiving that he had spoken foolishly, he made haste to add: "Well, con-

[1] *Probably Domenico Iacobacci, who obtained the hat in 1517.*

[2] *A sua provisione stava, i.e., he was in the Cardinal's regular pay.*

[3] *Quanto. Perhaps we ought to read quando—when?*

sidering the sores are so new, and have not yet begun to stink, and that the remedies will be taken in time, you need not be too much afraid, for I have good hopes of curing you." When he had prescribed for me and gone away, a very dear friend of mine, called Giovanni Rigogli, came in, who fell to commiserating my great suffering and also my desertion by my comrade, and said: "Be of good cheer, my Benvenuto, for I will never leave your side until I see you restored to health." I told him not to come too close, since it was all over with me. Only I besought him to be so kind as to take a considerable quantity of crowns, which were lying in a little box near my bed, and when God had thought fit to remove me from this world, to send them to my poor father, writing pleasantly to him, in the way I too had done, so far as that appalling season of the plague permitted.[1] My beloved friend declared that he had no intention whatsoever of leaving me, and that come what might, in life or death, he knew very well what was his duty toward a friend. And so we went on by the help of God: and the admirable remedies which I had used began to work a great improvement, and I soon came well out of that dreadful sickness.

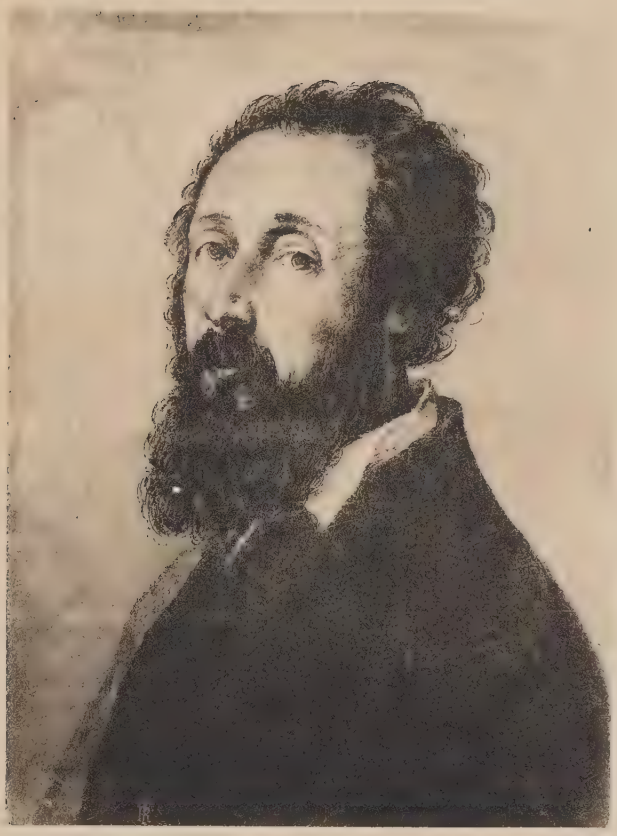
The sore was still open, with a plug of lint inside it and a plaster above, when I went out riding on a little wild pony. He was covered with hair four fin-

[1] *Come ancora io avevo fatto secondo l'usanza che promettava quell' arrabbiata stagione. I am not sure that I have given the right sense in the text above. Leclanché interprets the words thus: "that I too had fared according to the wont of that appalling season," i.e., had died of the plague. But I think the version in my sense is more true both to Italian and to Cellini's special style.*

gers long, and was exactly as big as a well-grown bear; indeed he looked just like a bear. I rode out on him to visit the painter Rosso, who was then living in the country, toward Cività Vecchia, at a place of Count Anguillara's, called Cervetera. I found my friend, and he was very glad to see me; whereupon I said: "I am come to do to you that which you did to me so many months ago." He burst out laughing, embraced and kissed me, and begged me for the Count's sake to keep quiet. I stayed in that place about a month, with much content and gladness, enjoying good wines and excellent food, and treated with the greatest kindness by the Count; every day I used to ride out alone along the seashore, where I dismounted, and filled my pockets with all sorts of pebbles, snail shells, and sea shells of great rarity and beauty.

On the last day (for after this I went there no more) I was attacked by a band of men, who had disguised themselves, and disembarked from a Moorish privateer. When they thought that they had run me into a certain passage, where it seemed impossible that I should escape from their hands, I suddenly mounted my pony, resolved to be roasted or boiled alive at that pass perilous, seeing I had little hope to evade one or the other of these fates;[1] but, as God willed, my pony, who was the same I have described above, took an incredibly wide jump, and brought me off in safety, for which I heartily thanked God. I told the story to the Count; he ran to arms; but we saw the galleys setting out to sea. The next day

[1] *i.e., to escape either being drowned or shot.*



GIULIO ROMANO
(BY HIMSELF)

following I went back sound and with good cheer to Rome.

XXX

The plague had by this time almost died out, so that the survivors, when they met together alive, rejoiced with much delight in one another's company. This led to the formation of a club of painters, sculptors, and goldsmiths, the best that were in Rome; and the founder of it was a sculptor with the name of Michel Agnolo.[1] He was a Sienese and a man of great ability, who could hold his own against any other workman in that art; but, above all, he was the most amusing comrade and the heartiest good fellow in the universe. Of all the members of the club, he was the eldest, and yet the youngest from the strength and vigour of his body. We often came together; at the very least twice a week. I must not omit to mention that our society counted Giulio Romano, the painter, and Gian Francesco, both of them celebrated pupils of the mighty Raffaello da Urbino.

After many and many merry meetings, it seemed good to our worthy president that for the following Sunday we should repair to supper in his house, and that each one of us should be obliged to bring with him his crow (such was the nickname Michel Agnolo gave to women in the club), and that whoso did not bring one should be sconced by paying a supper to the whole company. Those of us who had

[1] *This sculptor came to Rome with his compatriot Baldassare Peruzzi, and was employed upon the monument of Pope Adrian VI., which he executed with some help from Tribolo.*

no familiarity with women of the town, were forced to purvey themselves at no small trouble and expense, in order to appear without disgrace at that distinguished feast of artists. I had reckoned upon being well provided with a young woman of considerable beauty, called Pantasilea, who was very much in love with me; but I was obliged to give her up to one of my dearest friends, called Il Bachiacca, who on his side had been, and still was, over head and ears in love with her.[1] This exchange excited a certain amount of lover's anger, because the lady, seeing I had abandoned her at Bachiacca's first entreaty, imagined that I held in slight esteem the great affection which she bore me. In course of time a very serious incident grew out of this misunderstanding, through her desire to take revenge for the affront I had put upon her; whereof I shall speak hereafter in the proper place.

Well, then, the hour was drawing nigh when we had to present ourselves before that company of men of genius, each with his own crow; and I was still unprovided; and yet I thought it would be stupid to fail of such a madcap bagatelle;[2] but what particularly weighed upon my mind was that I did not choose to lend the light of my countenance in that illustrious sphere to some miserable plume-plucked scarecrow. All these considerations made me devise a pleasant

[1] *There were two artists at this epoch surnamed Bachiacca, the twin sons of Ubertino Verdi, called respectively Francesco and Antonio. Francesco was an excellent painter of miniature oil-pictures; Antonio the first embroiderer of his age. The one alluded to here is probably Francesco.*

[2] *Mancare di una sì pazza cosa. The pazza cosa may be the supper-party or the cornacchia.*

trick, for the increase of merriment and the diffusion of mirth in our society.

Having taken this resolve, I sent for a stripling of sixteen years, who lived in the next house to mine; he was the son of a Spanish coppersmith. This young man gave his time to Latin studies, and was very diligent in their pursuit. He bore the name of Diego, had a handsome figure, and a complexion of marvellous brilliancy; the outlines of his head and face were far more beautiful than those of the antique Antinous: I had often copied them, gaining thereby much honour from the works in which I used them. The youth had no acquaintances, and was therefore quite unknown; dressed very ill and negligently; all his affections being set upon those wonderful studies of his. After bringing him to my house, I begged him to let me array him in the woman's clothes which I had caused to be laid out. He readily complied, and put them on at once, while I added new beauties to the beauty of his face by the elaborate and studied way in which I dressed his hair. In his ears I placed two little rings, set with two large and fair pearls; the rings were broken; they only clipped his ears, which looked as though they had been pierced. Afterwards I wreathed his throat with chains of gold and rich jewels, and ornamented his fair hands with rings. Then I took him in a pleasant manner by one ear, and drew him before a great looking-glass. The lad, when he beheld himself, cried out with a burst of enthusiasm: "Heavens! is that Diego?" I said: "That is Diego, from whom until this day I never asked for any kind of favour; but now I only beseech Diego

to do me pleasure in one harmless thing; and it is this—I want him to come in those very clothes to supper with the company of artists whereof he has often heard me speak." The young man, who was honest, virtuous, and wise, checked his enthusiasm, bent his eyes to the ground, and stood for a short while in silence. Then with a sudden move he lifted up his face and said: "With Benvenuto I will go; now let us start."

I wrapped his head in a large kind of napkin, which is called in Rome a summer-cloth; and when we reached the place of meeting, the company had already assembled, and everybody came forward to greet me. Michel Agnolo had placed himself between Giulio and Giovan Francesco. I lifted the veil from the head of my beauty; and then Michel Agnolo, who, as I have already said, was the most humorous and amusing fellow in the world, laid his two hands, the one on Giulio's and the other on Gian Francesco's shoulders, and pulling them with all his force, made them bow down, while he, on his knees upon the floor, cried out for mercy, and called to all the folk in words like these: "Behold ye of what sort are the angels of paradise! for though they are called angels, here shall ye see that they are not all of the male gender." Then with a loud voice he added:

"*Angel beauteous, angel best,*
*Save me thou, make thou me blest.*"

Upon this my charming creature laughed, and lifted the right hand and gave him a papal benediction, with many pleasant words to boot. So Michel Ag-

nolo stood up, and said it was the custom to kiss the feet of the Pope and the cheeks of angels; and having done the latter to Diego, the boy blushed deeply, which immensely enhanced his beauty.

When this reception was over, we found the whole room full of sonnets, which every man of us had made and sent to Michel Agnolo. My lad began to read them, and read them all aloud so gracefully, that his infinite charms were heightened beyond the powers of language to describe. Then followed conversation and witty sayings, on which I will not enlarge, for that is not my business; only one clever word must be mentioned, for it was spoken by that admirable painter Giulio, who, looking round with meaning[1] in his eyes on the bystanders, and fixing them particularly upon the women, turned to Michel Agnolo and said: "My dear Michel Agnolo, your nickname of crow very well suits those ladies to-day, though I vow they are somewhat less fair than crows by the side of one of the most lovely peacocks which fancy could have painted."

When the banquet was served and ready, and we were going to sit down to table, Giulio asked leave to be allowed to place us. This being granted, he took the women by the hand, and arranged them all upon the inner side, with my fair in the centre; then he placed all the men on the outside and me in the middle, saying there was no honour too great for my deserts. As a background to the women, there was spread an espalier of natural jasmines in full

[1] *Virtuosamente. Cellini uses the word virtuoso in many senses, but always more with reference to intellectual than moral qualities. It denotes genius, artistic ability, masculine force, &c.*

beauty,[1] which set off their charms, and especially Diego's, to such great advantage, that words would fail to describe the effect. Then we all of us fell to enjoying the abundance of our host's well-furnished table. The supper was followed by a short concert of delightful music, voices joining in harmony with instruments; and forasmuch as they were singing and playing from the book, my beauty begged to be allowed to sing his part. He performed the music better than almost all the rest, which so astonished the company that Giulio and Michel Agnolo dropped their earlier tone of banter, exchanging it for well-weighed terms of sober heartfelt admiration.

After the music was over, a certain Aurelio Ascolano,[2] remarkable for his gift as an improvisatory poet, began to extol the women in choice phrases of exquisite compliment. While he was chanting, the two girls who had my beauty between them never left off chattering. One of them related how she had gone wrong; the other asked mine how it had happened with her, and who were her friends, and how long she had been settled in Rome, and many other questions of the kind. It is true that, if I chose to describe such laughable episodes, I could relate several odd things which then occurred through Pantasilea's jealousy on my account; but since they form no part of my design, I pass them briefly over. At last the conversation of those loose women vexed my beauty, whom we had christened

[1] *Un tessuto di gelsumini naturali e bellissimi. Tessuto is properly something woven, a fabric; and I am not sure whether Cellini does not mean that the ladies had behind their backs a tapestry representing jasmines in a natural manner.*

[2] *Probably Eurialo d'Ascoli, a friend of Caro, Molza, Aretino.*

Pomona for the nonce; and Pomona, wanting to escape from their silly talk, turned restlessly upon her chair, first to one side and then to the other. The female brought by Giulio asked whether she felt indisposed. Pomona answered, yes, she thought she was a month or so with child; this gave them the opportunity of feeling her body and discovering the real sex of the supposed woman. Thereupon they quickly withdrew their hands and rose from table, uttering such gibing words as are commonly addressed to young men of eminent beauty. The whole room rang with laughter and astonishment, in the midst of which Michel Agnolo, assuming a fierce aspect, called out for leave to inflict on me the penance he thought fit. When this was granted, he lifted me aloft amid the clamour of the company, crying: "Long live the gentleman! long live the gentleman!" and added that this was the punishment I deserved for having played so fine a trick. Thus ended that most agreeable supper-party, and each of us returned to his own dwelling at the close of day.

## XXXI

It would take too long to describe in detail all the many and divers pieces of work which I executed for a great variety of men. At present I need only say that I devoted myself with sustained diligence and industry to acquiring mastery in the several branches of art which I enumerated a short while back. And so I went on labouring incessantly at all of them; but since no opportunity has presented itself as yet

for describing my most notable performances, I shall wait to report them in their proper place before very long. The Sienese sculptor, Michel Agnolo, of whom I have recently been speaking, was at that time making the monument of the late Pope Adrian. Giulio Romano went to paint for the Marquis of Mantua. The other members of the club betook themselves in different directions, each to his own business; so that our company of artists was well-nigh altogether broken up.

About this time there fell into my hands some little Turkish poniards; the handle as well as the blade of these daggers was made of iron, and so too was the sheath. They were engraved by means of iron implements with foliage in the most exquisite Turkish style, very neatly filled in with gold. The sight of them stirred in me a great desire to try my own skill in that branch, so different from the others which I practised; and finding that I succeeded to my satisfaction, I executed several pieces. Mine were far more beautiful and more durable than the Turkish, and this for divers reasons. One was that I cut my grooves much deeper and with wider trenches in the steel; for this is not usual in Turkish work. Another was that the Turkish arabesques are only composed of arum leaves with a few small sunflowers;[1] and though these have a certain grace, they do not yield so lasting a pleasure as the patterns which we use. It is true that in Italy we have several different ways of designing foliage; the Lombards, for example, construct very beautiful patterns by copying the

[1] *Gichero, arum maculatum, and clizia, the sunflower.*

leaves of briony and ivy in exquisite curves, which are extremely agreeable to the eye; the Tuscans and the Romans make a better choice, because they imitate the leaves of the acanthus, commonly called bear's-foot, with its stalks and flowers, curling in divers wavy lines; and into these arabesques one may excellently well insert the figures of little birds and different animals, by which the good taste of the artist is displayed. Some hints for creatures of this sort can be observed in nature among the wild flowers, as, for instance, in snapdragons and some few other plants, which must be combined and developed with the help of fanciful imaginings by clever draughtsmen. Such arabesques are called grotesques by the ignorant. They have obtained this name of grotesques among the moderns through being found in certain subterranean caverns in Rome by students of antiquity; which caverns were formerly chambers, hot-baths, cabinets for study, halls, and apartments of like nature. The curious discovering them in such places (since the level of the ground has gradually been raised while they have remained below, and since in Rome these vaulted rooms are commonly called grottoes), it has followed that the word grotesque is applied to the patterns I have mentioned. But this is not the right term for them, inasmuch as the ancients, who delighted in composing monsters out of goats, cows, and horses, called these chimerical hybrids by the name of monsters; and the modern artificers of whom I spoke, fashioned from the foliage which they copied monsters of like nature; for these the proper name is therefore monsters, and

not grotesques. Well, then, I designed patterns of this kind, and filled them in with gold, as I have mentioned; and they were far more pleasing to the eye than the Turkish.

It chanced at that time that I lighted upon some jars or little antique urns filled with ashes, and among the ashes were some iron rings inlaid with gold (for the ancients also used that art), and in each of the rings was set a tiny cameo of shell. On applying to men of learning, they told me that these rings were worn as amulets by folk desirous of abiding with mind unshaken in any extraordinary circumstance, whether of good or evil fortune. Hereupon, at the request of certain noblemen who were my friends, I undertook to fabricate some trifling rings of this kind; but I made them of refined steel; and after they had been well engraved and inlaid with gold, they produced a very beautiful effect; and sometimes a single ring brought me more than forty crowns, merely in payment for my labour.

It was the custom at that epoch to wear little golden medals, upon which every nobleman or man of quality had some device or fancy of his own engraved; and these were worn in the cap. Of such pieces I made very many, and found them extremely difficult to work. I have already mentioned the admirable craftsman Caradosso, who used to make such ornaments; and as there were more than one figure on each piece, he asked at least a hundred gold crowns for his fee. This being so—not, however, because his prices were so high, but because he worked so slowly—I began to be employed by certain no-

blemen, for whom, among other things, I made a medal in competition with that great artist, and it had four figures, upon which I had expended an infinity of labour. These men of quality, when they compared my piece with that of the famous Caradosso, declared that mine was by far the better executed and more beautiful, and bade me ask what I liked as the reward of my trouble; for since I had given them such perfect satisfaction, they wished to do the like by me. I replied that my greatest reward and what I most desired was to have rivalled the masterpieces of so eminent an artist; and that if their lordships thought I had, I acknowledged myself to be most amply rewarded. With this I took my leave, and they immediately sent me such a very liberal present, that I was well content; indeed there grew in me so great a spirit to do well, that to this event I attribute what will afterwards be related of my progress.

## XXXII

I shall be obliged to digress a little from the history of my art, unless I were to omit some annoying incidents which have happened in the course of my troubled career. One of these, which I am about to describe, brought me into the greatest risk of my life. I have already told the story of the artists' club, and of the farcical adventures which happened owing to the woman whom I mentioned, Pantasilea, the one who felt for me that false and fulsome love. She was furiously enraged because of the pleasant trick by which I brought Diego to our banquet, and she swore

to be revenged on me. How she did so is mixed up with the history of a young man called Luigi Pulci, who had recently come to Rome. He was the son of one of the Pulcis, who had been beheaded for incest with his daughter; and the youth possessed extraordinary gifts for poetry together with sound Latin scholarship; he wrote well, was graceful in manners, and of surprising personal beauty; he had just left the service of some bishop, whose name I do not remember, and was thoroughly tainted with a very foul disease. While he was yet a lad and living in Florence, they used in certain places of the city to meet together during the nights of summer on the public streets; and he, ranking among the best of the improvisatori, sang there. His recitations were so admirable, that the divine Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, that prince of sculptors and of painters, went, wherever he heard that he would be, with the greatest eagerness and delight to listen to him. There was a man called Piloto, a goldsmith, very able in his art, who, together with myself, joined Buonarroti upon these occasions.[1] Thus acquaintance sprang up between me and Luigi Pulci; and so, after the lapse of many years, he came, in the miserable plight which I have mentioned, to make himself known to me again in Rome, beseeching me for God's sake to help him. Moved to compassion by his great talents, by the love of my fatherland, and by my own natural ten-

[1] *Piloto, of whom we shall hear more hereafter, was a prominent figure in the Florentine society of artists, and a celebrated practical joker. Vasari says that a young man of whom he had spoken ill murdered him. Lasca's Novelle, Le Cene, should be studied by those who seek an insight into this curious Bohemia of the sixteenth century.*

derness of heart, I took him into my house, and had him medically treated in such wise that, being but a youth, he soon regained his health. While he was still pursuing his cure, he never omitted his studies, and I provided him with books according to the means at my disposal. The result was that Luigi, recognising the great benefits he had received from me, oftentimes with words and tears returned me thanks, protesting that if God should ever put good fortune in his way, he would recompense me for my kindness. To this I replied that I had not done for him as much as I desired, but only what I could, and that it was the duty of human beings to be mutually serviceable. Only I suggested that he should repay the service I had rendered him by doing likewise to some one who might have the same need of him as he had had of me.

The young man in question began to frequent the Court of Rome, where he soon found a situation, and enrolled himself in the suite of a bishop, a man of eighty years, who bore the title of Gurgensis.[1] This bishop had a nephew called Messer Giovanni: he was a nobleman of Venice; and the said Messer Giovanni made show of marvellous attachment to Luigi Pulci's talents; and under the pretence of these talents, he brought him as familiar to himself as his own flesh and blood. Luigi having talked of me, and of his great obligations to me, with Messer Giovanni, the latter expressed a wish to make my acquaintance. Thus then it came to pass, that when I had upon a certain evening invited that woman

[1] *Girolamo Balbo, of the noble Venetian family, Bishop of Gurck, in Carinthia.*

Pantasilea to supper, and had assembled a company of men of parts who were my friends, just at the moment of our sitting down to table, Messer Giovanni and Luigi Pulci arrived, and after some complimentary speeches, they both remained to sup with us. The shameless strumpet, casting her eyes upon the young man's beauty, began at once to lay her nets for him; perceiving which, when the supper had come to an agreeable end, I took Luigi aside, and conjured him, by the benefits he said he owed me, to have nothing whatever to do with her. To this he answered: "Good heavens, Benvenuto! do you then take me for a madman?" I rejoined: "Not for a madman, but for a young fellow;" and I swore to him by God: "I do not give that woman the least thought; but for your sake I should be sorry if through her you came to break your neck." Upon these words he vowed and prayed to God, that, if ever he but spoke with her, he might upon the moment break his neck. I think the poor lad swore this oath to God with all his heart, for he did break his neck, as I shall presently relate. Messer Giovanni showed signs too evident of loving him in a dishonourable way; for we began to notice that Luigi had new suits of silk and velvet every morning, and it was known that he abandoned himself altogether to bad courses. He neglected his fine talents, and pretended not to see or recognise me, because I had once rebuked him, and told him he was giving his soul to foul vices, which would make him break his neck, as he had vowed.

XXXIII

Now Messer Giovanni bought his favourite a very fine black horse, for which he paid 150 crowns. The beast was admirably trained to hand, so that Luigi could go daily to caracole around the lodgings of that prostitute Pantasilea. Though I took notice of this, I paid it no attention, only remarking that all things acted as their nature prompted; and meanwhile I gave my whole mind to my studies. It came to pass one Sunday evening that we were invited to sup together with the Sienese sculptor, Michel Agnolo, and the time of the year was summer. Bachiacca, of whom I have already spoken, was present at the party; and he had brought with him his old flame, Pantasilea. When we were at table, she sat between me and Bachiacca; but in the very middle of the banquet she rose, and excused herself upon the pretext of a natural need, saying she would speedily return. We, meanwhile, continued talking very agreeably and supping; but she remained an unaccountably long time absent. It chanced that, keeping my ears open, I thought I heard a sort of subdued tittering in the street below. I had a knife in hand, which I was using for my service at the table. The window was so close to where I sat, that, by merely rising, I could see Luigi in the street, together with Pantasilea; and I heard Luigi saying: "Oh, if that devil Benvenuto only saw us, should n't we just catch it!" She answered: "Have no fear; only listen to the noise they're making; we are the last thing they're

thinking of." At these words, having made them both well out, I leaped from the window, and took Luigi by the cape; and certainly I should then have killed him with the knife I held, but that he was riding a white horse, to which he clapped spurs, leaving his cape in my grasp, in order to preserve his life. Pantasilea took to her heels in the direction of a neighbouring church. The company at supper rose immediately, and came down, entreating me in a body to refrain from putting myself and them to inconvenience for a strumpet. I told them that I should not have let myself be moved on her account, but that I was bent on punishing the infamous young man, who showed how little he regarded me. Accordingly I would not yield to the remonstrances of those ingenious and worthy men, but took my sword, and went alone toward Prati: the house where we were supping, I should say, stood close to the Castello gate, which led to Prati.[1] Walking thus upon the road to Prati, I had not gone far before the sun sank, and I re-entered Rome itself at a slow pace. Night had fallen; darkness had come on; but the gates of Rome were not yet shut.

Toward two hours after sunset, I walked along Pantasilea's lodging, with the intention, if Luigi Pulci were there, of doing something to the discontent of both. When I heard and saw that no one but a poor servant-girl called Canida was in the house, I went

[1] *The Porta Castello was the gate called after the Castle of S. Angelo. Prati, so far as I can make out, was an open space between the Borgo and the Bridge of S. Angelo. In order to get inside Rome itself, Cellini had to pass a second gate. His own lodging and Pantasilea's house were in the quarter of the Bianchi, where are now the Via Giulia and Via de' Banchi Vecchi.*

to put away my cloak and the scabbard of my sword, and then returned to the house, which stood behind the Banchi on the river Tiber. Just opposite stretched a garden belonging to an innkeeper called Romolo. It was enclosed by a thick hedge of thorns, in which I hid myself, standing upright, and waiting till the woman came back with Luigi. After keeping watch awhile there, my friend Bachiacca crept up to me; whether led by his own suspicions or by the advice of others, I cannot say. In a low voice he called out to me: "Gossip" (for so we used to name ourselves for fun; and then he prayed me for God's love, using the words which follow, with tears in the tone of his voice: "Dear gossip, I entreat you not to injure that poor girl; she at least has erred in no wise in this matter—no, not at all." When I heard what he was saying, I replied: "If you don't take yourself off now, at this first word I utter, I will bring my sword here down upon your head." Overwhelmed with fright, my poor gossip was suddenly taken ill with the colic, and withdrew to ease himself apart; indeed, he could not but obey the call. There was a glorious heaven of stars, which shed good light to see by. All of a sudden I was aware of the noise of many horses; they were coming toward me from the one side and the other. It turned out to be Luigi and Pantasilea, attended by a certain Messer Benvegnato of Perugia, who was chamberlain to Pope Clement, and followed by four doughty captains of Perugia, with some other valiant soldiers in the flower of youth; altogether reckoned, there were more than twelve swords. When I understood the matter, and saw not how to fly,

I did my best to crouch into the hedge. But the thorns pricked and hurt me, goading me to madness like a bull; and I had half resolved to take a leapand hazard my escape. Just then Luigi, with his arm round Pantasilea's neck, was heard crying: "I must kiss you once again, if only to insult that traitor Benvenuto." At that moment, annoyed as I was by the prickles, and irritated by the young man's words, I sprang forth, lifted my sword on high, and shouted at the top of my voice: "You are all dead folk!" My blow descended on the shoulder of Luigi; but the satyrs who doted on him, had steeled his person round with coats of mail and such-like villainous defences; still the stroke fell with crushing force. Swerving aside, the sword hit Pantasilea full in nose and mouth. Both she and Luigi grovelled on the ground, while Bachiacca, with his breeches down to heels, screamed out and ran away. Then I turned upon the others boldly with my sword; and those valiant fellows, hearing a sudden commotion in the tavern, thought there was an army coming of a hundred men; and though they drew their swords with spirit, yet two horses which had taken fright in the tumult cast them into such disorder that a couple of the best riders were thrown, and the remainder took to flight. I, seeing that the affair was turning out well for me, ran as quickly as I could, and came off with honour from the engagement, not wishing to tempt fortune more than was my duty. During this hurly-burly, some of the soldiers and captains wounded themselves with their own arms; and Messer Benvegnato, the Pope's chamberlain, was kicked and trampled by his

mule. One of the servants also, who had drawn his sword, fell down together with his master, and wounded him badly in the hand. Maddened by the pain, he swore louder than all the rest in his Perugian jargon, crying out: "By the body of God, I will take care that Benvegnato teaches Benvenuto how to live." He afterwards commissioned one of the captains who were with him (braver perhaps than the others, but with less aplomb, as being but a youth) to seek me out. The fellow came to visit me in the place of my retirement; that was the palace of a great Neapolitan nobleman, who had become acquainted with me in my art, and had besides taken a fancy to me because of my physical and mental aptitude for fighting, to which my lord himself was personally well inclined. So, then, finding myself made much of, and being precisely in my element, I gave such answer to the captain as I think must have made him earnestly repent of having come to look me up. After a few days, when the wounds of Luigi, and the strumpet, and the rest were healing, this great Neapolitan nobleman received overtures from Messer Benvegnato; for the prelate's anger had cooled, and he proposed to ratify a peace between me and Luigi and the soldiers, who had personally no quarrel with me, and only wished to make my acquaintance. Accordingly my friend the nobleman replied that he would bring me where they chose to appoint, and that he was very willing to effect a reconciliation. He stipulated that no words should be bandied about on either side, seeing that would be little to their credit; it was enough to go

through the form of drinking together and exchanging kisses; he for his part undertook to do the talking, and promised to settle the matter to their honour. This arrangement was carried out. On Thursday evening my protector took me to the house of Messer Benvegnato, where all the soldiers who had been present at that discomfiture were assembled, and already seated at table. My nobleman was attended by thirty brave fellows, all well armed; a circumstance which Messer Benvegnato had not anticipated. When we came into the hall, he walking first, I following, he spake to this effect: "God save you, gentlemen; we have come to see you, I and Benvenuto, whom I love like my own brother; and we are ready to do whatever you propose." Messer Benvegnato, seeing the hall fill with such a crowd of men, called out: "It is only peace, and nothing else, we ask of you." Accordingly he promised that the governor of Rome and his catchpoles should give me no trouble. Then we made peace, and I returned to my shop, where I could not stay an hour without that Neapolitan nobleman either coming to see me or sending for me.

Meanwhile Luigi Pulci, having recovered from his wound, rode every day upon the black horse which was so well trained to heel and bridle. One day, among others, after it had rained a little, and he was making his horse curvet just before Pantasilea's door, he slipped and fell, with the horse upon him. His right leg was broken short off in the thigh; and after a few days he died there in Pantasilea's lodgings, discharging thus the vow he registered so heartily

to Heaven. Even so may it be seen that God keeps account of the good and the bad, and gives to each one what he merits.

XXXIV

The whole world was now in warfare.[1] Pope Clement had sent to get some troops from Giovanni de' Medici, and when they came, they made such disturbances in Rome, that it was ill living in open shops.[2] On this account I retired to a good snug house behind the Banchi, where I worked for all the friends I had acquired. Since I produced few things of much importance at that period, I need not waste time in talking about them. I took much pleasure in music and amusements of the kind. On the death of Giovanni de' Medici in Lombardy, the Pope, at the advice of Messer Jacopo Salviati, dismissed the five bands he had engaged; and when the Constable of Bourbon knew there were no troops in Rome, he pushed his army with the utmost energy up to the city. The whole of Rome upon this flew to arms. I happened to be intimate with Alessandro, the son of Piero del Bene, who, at the time when the Colonnesi entered Rome, had requested me to guard his palace.[3] On this more serious occasion, therefore, he

[1] *War had broken out in* 1521 *between Charles V. and Francis I., which disturbed all Europe and involved the States of Italy in serious complications. At the moment when this chapter opens, the Imperialist army under the Constable of Bourbon was marching upon Rome in* 1527.

[2] *These troops entered Rome in October* 1526. *They were disbanded in March* 1527.

[3] *Cellini here refers to the attack made upon Rome by the great Ghibelline house of Colonna, led by their chief captain, Pompeo, in September* 1526. *They took possession of the city and drove Clement into the Castle of S. Angelo, where they forced him to agree to terms favouring the Imperial cause. It was customary for Roman gentle-*

prayed me to enlist fifty comrades for the protection of the said house, appointing me their captain, as I had been when the Colonnesi came. So I collected fifty young men of the highest courage, and we took up our quarters in his palace, with good pay and excellent appointments.

Bourbon's army had now arrived before the walls of Rome, and Alessandro begged me to go with him to reconnoitre. So we went with one of the stoutest fellows in our company; and on the way a youth called Cecchino della Casa joined himself to us. On reaching the walls by the Campo Santo, we could see that famous army, which was making every effort to enter the town. Upon the ramparts where we took our station, several young men were lying killed by the besiegers; the battle raged there desperately, and there was the densest fog imaginable. I turned to Alessandro and said: "Let us go home as soon as we can, for there is nothing to be done here; you see the enemies are mounting, and our men are in flight." Alessandro, in a panic, cried: "Would God that we had never come here!" and turned in maddest haste to fly. I took him up somewhat sharply with these words: "Since you have brought me here, I must perform some action worthy of a man;" and directing my arquebuse where I saw the thickest and most serried troop of fighting men, I aimed exactly at one whom I remarked to be higher than the rest: the fog prevented me from being certain whether he was on horseback or on foot. Then I turned to

*men to hire bravi for the defence of their palaces when any extraordinary disturbance was expected, as, for example, upon the vacation of the Papal Chair.*

CASTELLO SANT' ANGELO
ROME

Alessandro and Cecchino, and bade them discharge their arquebuses, showing them how to avoid being hit by the besiegers. When we had fired two rounds apiece, I crept cautiously up to the wall, and observing among the enemy a most extraordinary confusion, I discovered afterwards that one of our shots had killed the Constable of Bourbon; and from what I subsequently learned, he was the man whom I had first noticed above the heads of the rest.[1]

Quitting our position on the ramparts, we crossed the Campo Santo, and entered the city by St. Peter's; then coming out exactly at the church of Santo Agnolo, we got with the greatest difficulty to the great gate of the castle; for the generals Renzo di Ceri and Orazio Baglioni were wounding and slaughtering everybody who abandoned the defence of the walls.[2] By the time we had reached the great gate, part of the foemen had already entered Rome, and we had them in our rear. The castellan had ordered the portcullis to be lowered, in order to do which they cleared a little space, and this enabled us four to get inside. On the instant that I entered, the captain Pallone de' Medici claimed me as being of the Papal household, and forced me to abandon Alessandro, which I had to do, much against my will. I

[1] *All historians of the sack of Rome agree in saying that Bourbon was shot dead while placing ladders against the outworks near the shop Cellini mentions. But the honour of firing the arquebuse which brought him down cannot be assigned to any one in particular. Very different stories were current on the subject. See Gregorovius, Stadt Rom, vol. viii. p. 522.*

[2] *For Renzo di Ceri see above, p. 132. Orazio Baglioni, of the semi-princely Perugian family, was a distinguished Condottiere. He subsequently obtained the captaincy of the Bande Nere, and died fighting near Naples in 1528. Orazio murdered several of his cousins in order to acquire the lordship of Perugia. His brother Malatesta undertook to defend Florence in the siege of 1530, and sold the city by treason to Clement.*

ascended to the keep, and at the same instant Pope Clement came in through the corridors into the castle; he had refused to leave the palace of St. Peter earlier, being unable to believe that his enemies would effect their entrance into Rome.[1] Having got into the castle in this way, I attached myself to certain pieces of artillery, which were under the command of a bombardier called Giuliano Fiorentino. Leaning there against the battlements, the unhappy man could see his poor house being sacked, and his wife and children outraged; fearing to strike his own folk, he dared not discharge the cannon, and flinging the burning fuse upon the ground, he wept as though his heart would break, and tore his cheeks with both his hands.[2] Some of the other bombardiers were behaving in like manner; seeing which, I took one of the matches, and got the assistance of a few men who were not overcome by their emotions. I aimed some swivels and falconets at points where I saw it would be useful, and killed with them a good number of the enemy. Had it not been for this, the troops who poured into Rome that morning, and were marching straight upon the castle, might possibly have entered it with ease, because the artillery was doing them no damage. I went on firing under

[1] *Giovio, in his Life of the Cardinal Prospero Colonna, relates how he accompanied Clement in his flight from the Vatican to the castle. While passing some open portions of the gallery, he threw his violet mantle and cap of a Monsignore over the white stole of the Pontiff, for fear he might be shot at by the soldiers in the streets below.*

[2] *The short autobiography of Raffaello da Montelupo, a man in many respects resembling Cellini, confirms this part of our author's narrative. It is one of the most interesting pieces of evidence regarding what went on inside the castle during the sack of Rome. Montelupo was also a gunner, and commanded two pieces.*

the eyes of several cardinals and lords, who kept blessing me and giving me the heartiest encouragement. In my enthusiasm I strove to achieve the impossible; let it suffice that it was I who saved the castle that morning, and brought the other bombardiers back to their duty.[1] I worked hard the whole of that day; and when the evening came, while the army was marching into Rome through the Trastevere, Pope Clement appointed a great Roman nobleman named Antonio Santacroce to be captain of all the gunners. The first thing this man did was to come to me, and having greeted me with the utmost kindness, he stationed me with five fine pieces of artillery on the highest point of the castle, to which the name of the Angel specially belongs. This circular eminence goes round the castle, and surveys both Prati and the town of Rome. The captain put under my orders enough men to help in managing my guns, and having seen me paid in advance, he gave me rations of bread and a little wine, and begged me to go forward as I had begun. I was perhaps more inclined by nature to the profession of arms than to the one I had adopted, and I took such pleasure in its duties that I discharged them better than those of my own art. Night came, the enemy had entered Rome, and we who were in the castle (especially myself, who have always taken pleasure in extraordinary sights) stayed gazing on the indescribable scene of tumult and conflagration in the streets below. People who were anywhere else but where we

[1] *This is an instance of Cellini's exaggeration. He did more than yeoman's service, no doubt. But we cannot believe that, without him, the castle would have been taken.*

were, could not have formed the least imagination of what it was. I will not, however, set myself to describe that tragedy, but will content myself with continuing the history of my own life and the circumstances which properly belong to it.

## XXXV

During the course of my artillery practice, which I never intermitted through the whole month passed by us beleaguered in the castle, I met with a great many very striking accidents, all of them worthy to be related. But since I do not care to be too prolix, or to exhibit myself outside the sphere of my profession, I will omit the larger part of them, only touching upon those I cannot well neglect, which shall be the fewest in number and the most remarkable. The first which comes to hand is this: Messer Antonio Santacroce had made me come down from the Angel, in order to fire on some houses in the neighbourhood, where certain of our besiegers had been seen to enter. While I was firing, a cannon shot reached me, which hit the angle of a battlement, and carried off enough of it to be the cause why I sustained no injury. The whole mass struck me in the chest and took my breath away. I lay stretched upon the ground like a dead man, and could hear what the bystanders were saying. Among them all, Messer Antonio Santacroce lamented greatly, exclaiming: "Alas, alas! we have lost the best defender that we had." Attracted by the uproar, one of my comrades ran up; he was called Gianfrancesco, and was a bandsman, but was far more naturally given to medicine than to music. On the

spot he flew off, crying for a stoop of the very best Greek wine. Then he made a tile red-hot, and cast upon it a good handful of wormwood; after which he sprinkled the Greek wine; and when the wormwood was well soaked, he laid it on my breast, just where the bruise was visible to all. Such was the virtue of the wormwood that I immediately regained my scattered faculties. I wanted to begin to speak, but could not; for some stupid soldiers had filled my mouth with earth, imagining that by so doing they were giving me the sacrament; and indeed they were more like to have excommunicated me, since I could with difficulty come to myself again, the earth doing me more mischief than the blow. However, I escaped that danger, and returned to the rage and fury of the guns, pursuing my work there with all the ability and eagerness that I could summon.

Pope Clement, by this, had sent to demand assistance from the Duke of Urbino, who was with the troops of Venice; he commissioned the envoy to tell his Excellency that the Castle of St. Angelo would send up every evening three beacons from its summit, accompanied by three discharges of the cannon thrice repeated, and that so long as this signal was continued, he might take for granted that the castle had not yielded. I was charged with lighting the beacons and firing the guns for this purpose; and all this while I pointed my artillery by day upon the places where mischief could be done. The Pope, in consequence, began to regard me with still greater favour, because he saw that I discharged my functions as intelligently as the task demanded. Aid from the Duke

of Urbino never came; on which, as it is not my business, I will make no further comment.[1]

XXXVI

While I was at work upon that diabolical task of mine, there came from time to time to watch me some of the cardinals who were invested in the castle; and most frequently the Cardinal of Ravenna and the Cardinal de' Gaddi.[2] I often told them not to show themselves, since their nasty red caps gave a fair mark to our enemies. From neighbouring buildings, such as the Torre de' Bini, we ran great peril when they were there; and at last I had them locked off, and gained thereby their deep ill-will. I frequently received visits also from the general, Orazio Baglioni, who was very well affected toward me. One day while he was talking with me, he noticed something going forward in a drinking-place outside the Porta di Castello, which bore the name of Baccanello. This tavern had for sign a sun painted between two windows, of a bright red colour. The windows being closed, Signor Orazio concluded that a band of soldiers were carousing at table just between them and

[1] *Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, commanded a considerable army as general of the Church, and was now acting for Venice. Why he effected no diversion while the Imperial troops were marching upon Rome, and why he delayed to relieve the city, was never properly explained. Folk attributed his impotent conduct partly to a natural sluggishness in warfare, and partly to his hatred for the house of Medici. Leo X. had deprived him of his dukedom, and given it to a Medicean prince. It is to this that Cellini probably refers in the cautious phrase which ends the chapter.*

[2] *Benedetto Accolti of Arezzo, Archbishop of Ravenna in 1524, obtained the hat in 1527, three days before the sack of Rome. He was a distinguished man of letters. Niccolò Gaddi was created Cardinal on the same day as Accolti. We shall hear more of him in Cellini's pages.*

behind the sun. So he said to me: "Benvenuto, if you think that you could hit that wall an ell's breadth from the sun with your demi-cannon here, I believe you would be doing a good stroke of business, for there is a great commotion there, and men of much importance must probably be inside the house." I answered that I felt quite capable of hitting the sun in its centre, but that a barrel full of stones, which was standing close to the muzzle of the gun, might be knocked down by the shock of the discharge and the blast of the artillery. He rejoined: "Don't waste time, Benvenuto. In the first place, it is not possible, where it is standing, that the cannon's blast should bring it down; and even if it were to fall, and the Pope himself was underneath, the mischief would not be so great as you imagine. Fire, then, only fire!" Taking no more thought about it, I struck the sun in the centre, exactly as I said I should. The cask was dislodged, as I predicted, and fell precisely between Cardinal Farnese and Messer Jacopo Salviati.[1] It might very well have dashed out the brains of both of them, except that just at that very moment Farnese was reproaching Salviati with having caused the sack of Rome, and while they stood apart from one another to exchange opprobrious remarks, my gabion fell without destroying them. When he heard the uproar in the court below, good Signor Orazio dashed off in a hurry; and I, thrusting my neck forward where the cask had fallen, heard some people saying: "It would not be a bad job to kill that gun-

[1] *Alessandro Farnese, Dean of the Sacred College, and afterwards Pope Paul III. Of Giacopo Salviati we have already heard, p.* 84.

ner!" Upon this I turned two falconets toward the staircase, with mind resolved to let blaze on the first man who attempted to come up. The household of Cardinal Farnese must have received orders to go and do me some injury; accordingly I prepared to receive them, with a lighted match in hand. Recognising some who were approaching, I called out: "You lazy lubbers, if you don't pack off from there, and if but a man's child among you dares to touch the staircase, I have got two cannon loaded, which will blow you into powder. Go and tell the Cardinal that I was acting at the order of superior officers, and that what we have done and are doing is in defence of them priests,[1] and not to hurt them." They made away; and then came Signor Orazio Baglioni, running. I bade him stand back, else I'd murder him; for I knew very well who he was. He drew back a little, not without a certain show of fear, and called out: "Benvenuto, I am your friend!" To this I answered: "Sir, come up, but come alone, and then come as you like." The general, who was a man of mighty pride, stood still a moment, and then said angrily: "I have a good mind not to come up again, and to do quite the opposite of that which I intended toward you." I replied that just as I was put there to defend my neighbours, I was equally well able to defend myself too. He said that he was coming alone; and when he arrived at the top of the stairs, his features were more discomposed than I thought reasonable. So I kept my hand upon my sword, and stood eyeing him askance. Upon this he

[1] *Loro preti. Perhaps their priests.*

began to laugh, and the colour coming back into his face, he said to me with the most pleasant manner: "Friend Benvenuto, I bear you as great love as I have it in my heart to give; and in God's good time I will render you proof of this. Would to God that you had killed those two rascals; for one of them is the cause of all this trouble, and the day perchance will come when the other will be found the cause of something even worse." He then begged me, if I should be asked, not to say that he was with me when I fired the gun; and for the rest bade me be of good cheer. The commotion which the affair made was enormous, and lasted a long while. However, I will not enlarge upon it further, only adding that I was within an inch of revenging my father on Messer Jacopo Salviati, who had grievously injured him, according to my father's frequent complaints. As it was, unwittingly I gave the fellow a great fright. Of Farnese I shall say nothing here, because it will appear in its proper place how well it would have been if I had killed him.

XXXVII

I pursued my business of artilleryman, and every day performed some extraordinary feat, whereby the credit and the favour I acquired with the Pope was something indescribable. There never passed a day but what I killed one or another of our enemies in the besieging army. On one occasion the Pope was walking round the circular keep,[1] when

[1] *The Mastio or main body of Hadrian's Mausoleum, which was converted into a fortress during the Middle Ages.*

he observed a Spanish Colonel in the Prati; he recognised the man by certain indications, seeing that this officer had formerly been in his service; and while he fixed his eyes on him, he kept talking about him. I, above by the Angel, knew nothing of all this, but spied a fellow down there, busying himself about the trenches with a javelin in his hand; he was dressed entirely in rose-colour; and so, studying the worst that I could do against him, I selected a gerfalcon which I had at hand; it is a piece of ordnance larger and longer than a swivel, and about the size of a demi-culverin. This I emptied, and loaded it again with a good charge of fine powder mixed with the coarser sort; then I aimed it exactly at the man in red, elevating prodigiously, because a piece of that calibre could hardly be expected to carry true at such a distance. I fired, and hit my man exactly in the middle. He had trussed his sword in front,[1] for swagger, after a way those Spaniards have; and my ball, when it struck him, broke upon the blade, and one could see the fellow cut in two fair halves. The Pope, who was expecting nothing of this kind, derived great pleasure and amazement from the sight, both because it seemed to him impossible that one should aim and hit the mark at such a distance, and also because the man was cut in two, and he could not comprehend how this should happen. He sent for me, and asked about it. I explained all the devices I had used in firing; but told him that why the man was cut in halves, neither he nor I could know. Upon my

[1] *S'aveva messo la spada dinanzi. Perhaps was bearing his sword in front of him.*

bended knees I then besought him to give me the pardon of his blessing for that homicide; and for all the others I had committed in the castle in the service of the Church. Thereat the Pope, raising his hand, and making a large open sign of the cross upon my face, told me that he blessed me, and that he gave me pardon for all murders I had ever perpetrated, or should ever perpetrate, in the service of the Apostolic Church. When I left him, I went aloft, and never stayed from firing to the utmost of my power; and few were the shots of mine that missed their mark. My drawing, and my fine studies in my craft, and my charming art of music, all were swallowed up in the din of that artillery; and if I were to relate in detail all the splendid things I did in that infernal work of cruelty, I should make the world stand by and wonder. But, not to be too prolix, I will pass them over. Only I must tell a few of the most remarkable, which are, as it were, forced in upon me.

To begin then: pondering day and night what I could render for my own part in defence of Holy Church, and having noticed that the enemy changed guard and marched past through the great gate of Santo Spirito, which was within a reasonable range, I thereupon directed my attention to that spot; but, having to shoot sideways, I could not do the damage that I wished, although I killed a fair percentage every day. This induced our adversaries, when they saw their passage covered by my guns, to load the roof of a certain house one night with thirty gabions, which obstructed the view I formerly enjoyed. Taking bet-

ter thought than I had done of the whole situation, I now turned all my five pieces of artillery directly on the gabions, and waited till the evening hour, when they changed guard. Our enemies, thinking they were safe, came on at greater ease and in a closer body than usual; whereupon I set fire to my blow-pipes.[1] Not merely did I dash to pieces the gabions which stood in my way; but, what was better, by that one blast I slaughtered more than thirty men. In consequence of this manœuvre, which I repeated twice, the soldiers were thrown into such disorder, that being, moreover, encumbered with the spoils of that great sack, and some of them desirous of enjoying the fruits of their labour, they oftentimes showed a mind to mutiny and take themselves away from Rome. However, after coming to terms with their valiant captain, Gian di Urbino,[2] they were ultimately compelled, at their excessive inconvenience, to take another road when they changed guard. It cost them three miles of march, whereas before they had but half a mile. Having achieved this feat, I was entreated with prodigious favours by all the men of quality who were invested in the castle. This incident was so important that I thought it well to relate it, before finishing the history of things outside my art, the which is the real object of my writing: forsooth, if I wanted to ornament my biography with such matters, I should have far too much to tell. There is only one more

[1] *Soffioni, the cannon being like tubes to blow a fire up.*

[2] *This captain was a Spaniard, who played a very considerable figure in the war, distinguishing himself at the capture of Genoa and the battle of Lodi in* 1522, *and afterwards acting as Lieutenant-General to the Prince of Orange. He held Naples against Orazio Baglioni in* 1528, *and died before Spello in* 1529.

circumstance which, now that the occasion offers, I propose to record.

XXXVIII

I shall skip over some intervening circumstances, and tell how Pope Clement, wishing to save the tiaras and the whole collection of the great jewels of the Apostolic Camera, had me called, and shut himself up together with me and the Cavalierino in a room alone.[1] This Cavalierino had been a groom in the stable of Filippo Strozzi; he was French, and a person of the lowest birth; but being a most faithful servant, the Pope had made him very rich, and confided in him like himself. So the Pope, the Cavaliere, and I, being shut up together, they laid before me the tiaras and jewels of the regalia; and his Holiness ordered me to take all the gems out of their gold settings. This I accordingly did; afterwards I wrapt them separately up in bits of paper, and we sewed them into the linings of the Pope's and the Cavaliere's clothes. Then they gave me all the gold, which weighed about two hundred pounds, and bade me melt it down as secretly as I was able. I went up to the Angel, where I had my lodging, and could lock the door so as to be free from interruption. There I built a little draught-furnace of bricks, with a largish pot, shaped like an open dish, at the bottom of it; and throwing the gold upon the coals, it gradually sank through and dropped into the pan. While the furnace

[1] *This personage cannot be identified. The Filippo Strozzi mentioned as having been his master was the great opponent of the Medicean despotism, who killed himself in prison after the defeat of Montemurlo in* 1539. *He married in early life a daughter of Piero de' Medici.*

was working, I never left off watching how to annoy our enemies; and as their trenches were less than a stone's-throw right below us, I was able to inflict considerable damage on them with some useless missiles,[1] of which there were several piles, forming the old munition of the castle. I chose a swivel and a falconet, which were both a little damaged in the muzzle, and filled them with the projectiles I have mentioned. When I fired my guns, they hurtled down like mad, occasioning all sorts of unexpected mischief in the trenches. Accordingly I kept these pieces always going at the same time that the gold was being melted down; and a little before vespers I noticed some one coming along the margin of the trench on muleback. The mule was trotting very quickly, and the man was talking to the soldiers in the trenches. I took the precaution of discharging my artillery just before he came immediately opposite; and so, making a good calculation, I hit my mark. One of the fragments struck him in the face; the rest were scattered on the mule, which fell dead. A tremendous uproar rose up from the trench; I opened fire with my other piece, doing them great hurt. The man turned out to be the Prince of Orange, who was carried through the trenches to a certain tavern in the neighbourhood, whither in a short while all the chief folk of the army came together.

When Pope Clement heard what I had done, he sent at once to call for me, and inquired into the circumstance. I related the whole, and added that the man must have been of the greatest consequence,

[1] *Passatojacci.*

because the inn to which they carried him had been immediately filled by all the chiefs of the army, so far at least as I could judge. The Pope, with a shrewd instinct, sent for Messer Antonio Santacroce, the nobleman who, as I have said, was chief and commander of the gunners. He bade him order all us bombardiers to point our pieces, which were very numerous, in one mass upon the house, and to discharge them all together upon the signal of an arquebuse being fired. He judged that if we killed the generals, the army, which was already almost on the point of breaking up, would take to flight. God perhaps had heard the prayers they kept continually making, and meant to rid them in this manner of those impious scoundrels.

We put our cannon in order at the command of Santacroce, and waited for the signal. But when Cardinal Orsini[1] became aware of what was going forward, he began to expostulate with the Pope, protesting that the thing by no means ought to happen, seeing they were on the point of concluding an accommodation, and that if the generals were killed, the rabble of the troops without a leader would storm the castle and complete their utter ruin. Consequently they could by no means allow the Pope's plan to be carried out. The poor Pope, in despair, seeing himself assassinated both inside the castle and without, said that he left them to arrange it. On this, our orders were countermanded; but I, who chafed

[1] *Franciotto Orsini was educated in the household of his kinsman Lorenzo de' Medici. He followed the profession of arms, and married; but after losing his wife took orders, and received the hat in* 1517.

against the leash,[1] when I knew that they were coming round to bid me stop from firing, let blaze one of my demi-cannons, and struck a pillar in the courtyard of the house, around which I saw a crowd of people clustering. This shot did such damage to the enemy that it was like to have made them evacuate the house. Cardinal Orsini was absolutely for having me hanged or put to death; but the Pope took up my cause with spirit. The high words that passed between them, though I well know what they were, I will not here relate, because I make no profession of writing history. It is enough for me to occupy myself with my own affairs.

XXXIX

After I had melted down the gold, I took it to the Pope, who thanked me cordially for what I had done, and ordered the Cavalierino to give me twenty-five crowns, apologising to me for his inability to give me more. A few days afterwards the articles of peace were signed. I went with three hundred comrades in the train of Signor Orazio Baglioni toward Perugia; and there he wished to make me captain of the company, but I was unwilling at the moment, saying that I wanted first to go and see my father, and to redeem the ban which was still in force against me at Florence. Signor Orazio told me that he had been appointed general of the Florentines; and Sir Pier Maria del Lotto, the envoy from Florence, was with him, to whom he specially recommended me as his man.[2]

[1] *Io che non potevo stare alle mosse.*

[2] *Pier Maria di Lotto of S. Miniato was notary to the Florentine Signoria. He*

BRONZE BY CELLINI
(FLORENCE)

In course of time I came to Florence in the company of several comrades. The plague was raging with indescribable fury. When I reached home, I found my good father, who thought either that I must have been killed in the sack of Rome, or else that I should come back to him a beggar. However, I entirely defeated both these expectations; for I was alive, with plenty of money, a fellow to wait on me, and a good horse. My joy on greeting the old man was so intense, that, while he embraced and kissed me, I thought that I must die upon the spot. After I had narrated all the devilries of that dreadful sack, and had given him a good quantity of crowns which I had gained by my soldiering, and when we had exchanged our tokens of affection, he went off to the Eight to redeem my ban. It so happened that one of those magistrates who sentenced me, was now again a member of the board. It was the very man who had so inconsiderately told my father he meant to march me out into the country with the lances. My father took this opportunity of addressing him with some meaning words, in order to mark his revenge, relying on the favour which Orazio Baglioni showed me.

Matters standing thus, I told my father how Signor Orazio had appointed me captain, and that I ought to begin to think of enlisting my company. At these words the poor old man was greatly disturbed, and begged me for God's sake not to turn my thoughts to such an enterprise, although he knew I should be fit for this or yet a greater busi-

*collected the remnants of the Bande Nere, and gave them over to Orazio Baglioni, who contrived to escape from S. Angelo in safety to Perugia.*

ness, adding that his other son, my brother, was already a most valiant soldier, and that I ought to pursue the noble art in which I had laboured so many years and with such diligence of study. Although I promised to obey him, he reflected, like a man of sense, that if Signor Orazio came to Florence, I could not withdraw myself from military service, partly because I had passed my word, as well as for other reasons. He therefore thought of a good expedient for sending me away, and spoke to me as follows: "Oh, my dear son, the plague in this town is raging with immitigable violence, and I am always fancying you will come home infected with it. I remember, when I was a young man, that I went to Mantua, where I was very kindly received, and stayed there several years. I pray and command you, for the love of me, to pack off and go thither; and I would have you do this to-day rather than to-morrow."

XL

I had always taken pleasure in seeing the world; and having never been in Mantua, I went there very willingly. Of the money I had brought to Florence, I left the greater part with my good father, promising to help him wherever I might be, and confiding him to the care of my elder sister. Her name was Cosa; and since she never cared to marry, she was admitted as a nun in Santa Orsola; but she put off taking the veil, in order to keep house for our old father, and to look after my younger sister, who was married to one Bartolommeo, a surgeon. So then,

leaving home with my father's blessing, I mounted my good horse, and rode off on it to Mantua.

It would take too long to describe that little journey in detail. The whole world being darkened over with plague and war, I had the greatest difficulty in reaching Mantua. However, in the end, I got there, and looked about for work to do, which I obtained from a Maestro Niccolò of Milan, goldsmith to the Duke of Mantua. Having thus settled down to work, I went after two days to visit Messer Giulio Romano, that most excellent painter, of whom I have already spoken, and my very good friend. He received me with the tenderest caresses, and took it very ill that I had not dismounted at his house. He was living like a lord, and executing a great work for the Duke outside the city gates, in a place called Del Te. It was a vast and prodigious undertaking, as may still, I suppose, be seen by those who go there.[1]

Messer Giulio lost no time in speaking of me to the Duke in terms of the warmest praise.[2] That Prince commissioned me to make a model for a reliquary, to hold the blood of Christ, which they have there, and say was brought them by Longinus. Then he turned to Giulio, bidding him supply me with a design for it. To this Giulio replied: "My lord, Benvenuto is a man who does not need other people's sketches, as your Excellency will be very well able to judge when you shall see his

[1] *This is the famous Palazzo del Te, outside the walls of Mantua. It still remains the chief monument of Giulio Romano's versatile genius.*

[2] *Federigo Gonzago was at this time Marquis of Mantua. Charles V. erected his fief into a duchy in* 1530.

model." I set hand to the work, and made a drawing for the reliquary, well adapted to contain the sacred phial. Then I made a little waxen model of the cover. This was a seated Christ, supporting his great cross aloft with the left hand, while he seemed to lean against it, and with the fingers of his right hand he appeared to be opening the wound in his side. When it was finished, it pleased the Duke so much that he heaped favours on me, and gave me to understand that he would keep me in his service with such appointments as should enable me to live in affluence.

Meanwhile, I had paid my duty to the Cardinal his brother, who begged the Duke to allow me to make the pontifical seal of his most reverend lordship.[1] This I began; but while I was working at it I caught a quartan fever. During each access of this fever I was thrown into delirium, when I cursed Mantua and its master and whoever stayed there at his own liking. These words were reported to the Duke by the Milanese goldsmith, who had not omitted to notice that the Duke wanted to employ me. When the Prince heard the ravings of my sickness, he flew into a passion against me; and I being out of temper with Mantua, our bad feeling was reciprocal. The seal was finished after four months, together with several other little pieces I made for the Duke under the name of the Cardinal. His Reverence paid me well, and bade

[1] *Ercole Gonzaga, created Cardinal in 1527. After the death of his brother, Duke Federigo, he governed Mantua for sixteen years as regent for his nephews, and became famous as a patron of arts and letters. He died at Trento in 1563 while presiding over the Council there, in the pontificate of Pius IV.*

me return to Rome, to that marvellous city where we had made acquaintance.

I quitted Mantua with a good sum of crowns, and reached Governo, where the most valiant general Giovanni had been killed.[1] Here I had a slight relapse of fever, which did not interrupt my journey, and coming now to an end, it never returned on me again. When I arrived at Florence, I hoped to find my dear father, and knocking at the door, a hump-backed woman in a fury showed her face at the window; she drove me off with a torrent of abuse, screaming that the sight of me was a consumption to her. To this misshapen hag I shouted: "Ho! tell me, cross-grained hunchback, is there no other face to see here but your ugly visage?" "No, and bad luck to you." Whereto I answered in a loud voice: "In less than two hours may it[2] never vex us more!" Attracted by this dispute, a neighbour put her head out, from whom I learned that my father and all the people in the house had died of the plague. As I had partly guessed it might be so, my grief was not so great as it would otherwise have been. The woman afterwards told me that only my sister Liperata had escaped, and that she had taken refuge with a pious lady named Mona Andrea de' Bellacci.[3]

I took my way from thence to the inn, and met by accident a very dear friend of mine, Giovanni Rigogli. Dismounting at his house, we proceeded to the piazza, where I received intelligence that my brother

[1] *Giovanni de' Medici, surnamed Delle Bande Nere.*

[2] *i.e., your ugly visage.*

[3] *Carpani states that between May and November 1527 about 40,000 persons died of plague in Florence.*

was alive, and went to find him at the house of a friend of his called Bertino Aldobrandini. On meeting, we made demonstrations of the most passionate affection; for he had heard that I was dead, and I had heard that he was dead; and so our joy at embracing one another was extravagant. Then he broke out into a loud fit of laughter, and said: "Come, brother, I will take you where I'm sure you'd never guess! You must know that I have given our sister Liperata away again in marriage, and she holds it for absolutely certain that you are dead." On our way we told each other all the wonderful adventures we had met with; and when we reached the house where our sister dwelt, the surprise of seeing me alive threw her into a fainting fit, and she fell senseless in my arms. Had not my brother been present, her speechlessness and sudden seizure must have made her husband imagine I was some one different from a brother—as indeed at first it did. Cecchino, however, explained matters, and busied himself in helping the swooning woman, who soon came to. Then, after shedding some tears for father, sister, husband, and a little son whom she had lost, she began to get the supper ready; and during our merry meeting all that evening we talked no more about dead folk, but rather discoursed gaily about weddings. Thus, then, with gladness and great enjoyment we brought our supper-party to an end.

XLI

On the entreaty of my brother and sister, I remained at Florence, though my own inclination led me to return to Rome. The dear friend, also, who had

helped me in some of my earlier troubles, as I have narrated (I mean Piero, son of Giovanni Landi)—he too advised me to make some stay in Florence; for the Medici were in exile, that is to say, Signor Ippolito and Signor Alessandro, who were afterwards respectively Cardinal and Duke of Florence; and he judged it would be well for me to wait and see what happened.[1]

At that time there arrived in Florence a Sienese, called Girolamo Marretti, who had lived long in Turkey and was a man of lively intellect. He came to my shop, and commissioned me to make a golden medal to be worn in the hat. The subject was to be Hercules wrenching the lion's mouth. While I was working at this piece, Michel Agnolo Buonarroti came oftentimes to see it. I had spent infinite pains upon the design, so that the attitude of the figure and the fierce passion of the beast were executed in quite a different style from that of any craftsman who had hitherto attempted such groups. This, together with the fact that the special branch of art was totally unknown to Michel Agnolo, made the divine master give such praises to my work that I felt incredibly inspired for further effort. However, I found little else to do but jewel-setting; and though I gained more thus than in any other way, yet I was

[1] *I may remind my readers that the three Medici of the ruling house were now illegitimate. Clement VII. was the bastard son of Giuliano, brother of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Ippolito, the Cardinal, was the bastard of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Alessandro was the reputed bastard of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Alessandro became Duke of Florence, and after poisoning his cousin Cardinal Ippolito, was murdered by a distant cousin, Lorenzino de' Medici. In this way the male line of Lorenzo the Magnificent was extinguished.*

dissatisfied, for I would fain have been employed upon some higher task than that of setting precious stones.

Just then I met with Federigo Ginori, a young man of a very lofty spirit. He had lived some years in Naples, and being endowed with great charms of person and presence, had been the lover of a Neapolitan princess. He wanted to have a medal made, with Atlas bearing the world upon his shoulders, and applied to Michel Agnolo for a design. Michel Agnolo made this answer: "Go and find out a young goldsmith named Benvenuto; he will serve you admirably, and certainly he does not stand in need of sketches by me. However, to prevent your thinking that I want to save myself the trouble of so slight a matter, I will gladly sketch you something; but meanwhile speak to Benvenuto, and let him also make a model; he can then execute the better of the two designs." Federigo Ginori came to me, and told me what he wanted, adding thereto how Michel Agnolo had praised me, and how he had suggested I should make a waxen model while he undertook to supply a sketch. The words of that great man so heartened me, that I set myself to work at once with eagerness upon the model; and when I had finished it, a painter who was intimate with Michel Agnolo, called Giuliano Bugiardini, brought me the drawing of Atlas.[1] On the same occasion I showed Giuliano my little model in wax, which was very different from

[1] *This painter was the pupil of Bertoldo, a man of simple manners and of some excellence in his art. The gallery at Bologna has a fine specimen of his painting. Michel Agnolo delighted in his society.*

Michel Agnolo's drawing; and Federigo, in concert with Bugiardini, agreed that I should work upon my model. So I took it in hand, and when Michel Agnolo saw it, he praised me to the skies. This was a figure, as I have said, chiselled on a plate of gold; Atlas had the heaven upon his back, made out of a crystal ball, engraved with the zodiac upon a field of lapis-lazuli. The whole composition produced an indescribably fine effect; and under it ran the legend *Summa tulisse juvat.*[1] Federigo was so thoroughly well pleased that he paid me very liberally. Aluigi Alamanni was at that time in Florence. Federigo Ginori, who enjoyed his friendship, brought him often to my workshop, and through this introduction we became very intimate together.[2]

XLII

Pope Clement had now declared war upon the city of Florence, which thereupon was put in a state of defence; and the militia being organised in each quarter of the town, I too received orders to serve in my turn. I provided myself with a rich outfit, and went about with the highest nobility of Florence, who showed a unanimous desire to fight for the defence of our liberties. Meanwhile the speeches which are usual upon such occasions were made in every quarter;[3] the young men met together more than

[1] *Cellini says Summam.*

[2] *This was the agreeable didactic poet Luigi Alamanni, who had to fly from Florence after a conspiracy against Cardinal Giulio de' Medici in 1522. He could never reconcile himself to the Medicean tyranny, and finally took refuge in France, where he was honoured by François I. He died at Amboise in 1556.*

[3] *Fecesi quelle orazioni. It may mean "the prayers were offered up."*

was their wont, and everywhere we had but one topic of conversation.

It happened one day, about noon, that a crowd of tall men and lusty young fellows, the first in the city, were assembled in my workshop, when a letter from Rome was put into my hands. It came from a man called Maestro Giacopino della Barca. His real name was Giacopo della Sciorina, but they called him della Barca in Rome, because he kept a ferry boat upon the Tiber between Ponte Sisto and Ponte Santo Agnolo. He was a person of considerable talent, distinguished by his pleasantries and striking conversation, and he had formerly been a designer of patterns for the cloth-weavers in Florence. This man was intimate with the Pope, who took great pleasure in hearing him talk. Being one day engaged in conversation, they touched upon the sack and the defence of the castle. This brought me to the Pope's mind, and he spoke of me in the very highest terms, adding that if he knew where I was, he should be glad to get me back. Maestro Giacopo said I was in Florence; whereupon the Pope bade the man write and tell me to return to him. The letter I have mentioned was to the effect that I should do well if I resumed the service of Clement, and that this was sure to turn out to my advantage.

The young men who were present were curious to know what the letter contained; wherefore I concealed it as well as I could. Afterwards I wrote to Maestro Giacopo, begging him by no means, whether for good or evil, to write to me again. He however grew more obstinate in his officiousness, and wrote

me another letter, so extravagantly worded, that if it had been seen, I should have got into serious trouble. The substance of it was that the Pope required me to come at once, wanting to employ me on work of the greatest consequence; also that if I wished to act aright, I ought to throw up everything, and not to stand against a Pope in the party of those hare-brained Radicals. This letter, when I read it, put me in such a fright, that I went to seek my dear friend Piero Landi. Directly he set eyes on me, he asked what accident had happened to upset me so. I told my friend that it was quite impossible for me to explain what lay upon my mind, and what was causing me this trouble; only I entreated him to take the keys I gave him, and to return the gems and gold in my drawers to such and such persons, whose names he would find inscribed upon my memorandum-book; next, I begged him to pack up the furniture of my house, and keep account of it with his usual loving-kindness; and in a few days he should hear where I was. The prudent young man, guessing perhaps pretty nearly how the matter stood, replied: "My brother, go your ways quickly; then write to me, and have no further care about your things." I did as he advised. He was the most loyal friend, the wisest, the most worthy, the most discreet, the most affectionate that I have ever known. I left Florence and went to Rome, and from there I wrote to him.[1]

[1] *Cellini has been severely taxed for leaving Florence at this juncture and taking service under Pope Clement, the oppressor of her liberties. His own narrative admits some sense of shame. Yet we should remember that he never took any decided*

XLIII

Upon my arrival in Rome, I found several of my former friends, by whom I was very well received and kindly entertained. No time was lost before I set myself to work at things which brought me profit, but were not notable enough to be described. There was a fine old man, a goldsmith, called Raffaello del Moro, who had considerable reputation in the trade, and was to boot a very worthy fellow. He begged me to consent to enter his workshop, saying he had some commissions of importance to execute, on which high profits might be looked for; so I accepted his proposal with good-will.

More than ten days had elapsed, and I had not presented myself to Maestro Giacopino della Barca. Meeting me one day by accident, he gave me a hearty welcome, and asked me how long I had been in Rome. When I told him I had been there about a fortnight, he took it very ill, and said that I showed little esteem for a Pope who had urgently compelled him to write three times for me. I, who had taken his persistence in the matter still more ill, made no reply, but swallowed down my irritation. The man, who suffered from a flux of words, began one of his long yarns, and went on talking, till at the last, when I saw him tired out, I merely said that he might bring me to the Pope when he saw fit. He answered that

*part in politics, and belonged to a family of Medicean sympathies. His father served Lorenzo and Piero; his brother was a soldier of Giovanni delle Bande Nere and Duke Alessandro. Many most excellent Florentines were convinced that the Medicean government was beneficial; and an artist had certainly more to expect from it than from the Republic.*

LEO X., GIULIO DE' MEDICI AND L. DE ROSSI
(RAPHAEL)

any time would do for him; and I, that I was always ready. So we took our way toward the palace. It was a Maundy Thursday; and when we reached the apartments of the Pope, he being known there and I expected, we were at once admitted.

The Pope was in bed, suffering from a slight indisposition, and he had with him Messer Jacopo Salviati and the Archbishop of Capua.[1] When the Pope set eyes on me, he was exceedingly glad. I kissed his feet, and then, as humbly as I could, drew near to him, and let him understand that I had things of consequence to utter. On this he waved his hand, and the two prelates retired to a distance from us. I began at once to speak: "Most blessed Father, from the time of the sack up to this hour, I have never been able to confess or to communicate, because they refuse me absolution. The case is this. When I melted down the gold and worked at the unsetting of those jewels, your Holiness ordered the Cavalierino to give me a modest reward for my labours, of which I received nothing, but on the contrary he rather paid me with abuse. When then I ascended to the chamber where I had melted down the gold, and washed the ashes, I found about a pound and a half of gold in tiny grains like millet-seeds; and inasmuch as I had not money enough to take me home respectably, I thought I would avail myself of this, and give it back again when opportunity should offer. Now I am here at the feet of your Holiness, who is

[1] *Nicolas Schomberg, a learned Dominican and disciple of Savonarola, made Archbishop of Capua in* 1520. *He was a faithful and able minister of Clement. Paul III. gave him the hat in* 1535, *and he died in* 1537.

the only true confessor. I entreat you to do me the favour of granting me indulgence, so that I may be able to confess and communicate, and by the grace of your Holiness regain the grace of my Lord God." Upon this the Pope, with a scarcely perceptible sigh, remembering perhaps his former trials, spoke as follows: "Benvenuto, I thoroughly believe what you tell me; it is in my power to absolve you of any unbecoming deed you may have done, and, what is more, I have the will. So, then, speak out with frankness and perfect confidence; for if you had taken the value of a whole tiara, I am quite ready to pardon you." Thereupon I answered: "I took nothing, most blessed Father, but what I have confessed; and this did not amount to the value of 140 ducats, for that was the sum I received from the Mint in Perugia, and with it I went home to comfort my poor old father." The Pope said: "Your father has been as virtuous, good, and worthy a man as was ever born, and you have not degenerated from him. I am very sorry that the money was so little; but such as you say it was, I make you a present of it, and give you my full pardon. Assure your confessor of this, if there is nothing else upon your conscience which concerns me. Afterwards, when you have confessed and communicated, you shall present yourself to me again, and it will be to your advantage."

When I parted from the Pope, Messer Giacopo and the Archbishop approached, and the Pope spoke to them in the highest terms imaginable about me; he said that he had confessed and absolved me; then he commissioned the Archbishop of Capua to send

for me and ask if I had any other need beyond this matter, giving him full leave to absolve me amply, and bidding him, moreover, treat me with the utmost kindness.

While I was walking away with Maestro Giacopino, he asked me very inquisitively what was the close and lengthy conversation I had had with his Holiness. After he had repeated the question more than twice, I said that I did not mean to tell him, because they were matters with which he had nothing to do, and therefore he need not go on asking me. Then I went to do what had been agreed on with the Pope; and after the two festivals were over, I again presented myself before his Holiness. He received me even better than before, and said: "If you had come a little earlier to Rome, I should have commissioned you to restore my two tiaras, which were pulled to pieces in the castle. These, however, with the exception of the gems, are objects of little artistic interest; so I will employ you on a piece of the very greatest consequence, where you will be able to exhibit all your talents. It is a button for my priest's cope, which has to be made round like a trencher, and as big as a little trencher, one-third of a cubit wide. Upon this I want you to represent a God the Father in half-relief, and in the middle to set that magnificent big diamond, which you remember, together with several other gems of the greatest value. Caradosso began to make me one, but did not finish it; I want yours to be finished quickly, so that I may enjoy the use of it a little while. Go, then, and make me a fine model." He had all the

jewels shown me, and then I went off like a shot[1] to set myself to work.

XLIV

During the time when Florence was besieged, Federigo Ginori, for whom I made that medal of Atlas, died of consumption, and the medal came into the hands of Messer Luigi Alamanni, who, after a little while, took it to present in person to Francis, king of France, accompanied by some of his own finest compositions. The King was exceedingly delighted with the gift; whereupon Messer Luigi told his Majesty so much about my personal qualities, as well as my art, and spoke so favourably, that the King expressed a wish to know me.

Meanwhile I pushed my model for the button forward with all the diligence I could, constructing it exactly of the size which the jewel itself was meant to have. In the trade of the goldsmiths it roused considerable jealousy among those who thought that they were capable of matching it. A certain Micheletto had just come to Rome;[2] he was very clever at engraving cornelians, and was, moreover, a most intelligent jeweller, an old man and of great celebrity. He had been employed upon the Pope's tiaras; and while I was working at my model, he wondered much that I had not applied to him, being as he was a man of intelligence and of large credit with the Pope. At last, when he saw that I was not coming to him, he came to me, and asked me what I was

[1] *Affusolato. Lit., straight as a spindle.*

[2] *Vasari calls this eminent engraver of gems Michelino.*

about. "What the Pope has ordered me," I answered. Then he said: "The Pope has commissioned me to superintend everything which is being made for his Holiness." I only replied that I would ask the Pope, and then should know what answer I ought to give him. He told me that I should repent, and departing in anger, had an interview with all the masters of the art; they deliberated on the matter, and charged Michele with the conduct of the whole affair. As was to be expected from a person of his talents, he ordered more than thirty drawings to be made, all differing in their details, for the piece the Pope had commissioned.

Having already access to his Holiness's ear, he took into his counsel another jeweller, named Pompeo, a Milanese, who was in favour with the Pope, and related to Messer Traiano, the first chamberlain of the court;[1] these two together, then, began to insinuate that they had seen my model, and did not think me up to a work of such extraordinary import. The Pope replied that he would also have to see it, and that if he then found me unfit for the purpose, he should look around for one who was fit. Both of them put in that they had several excellent designs ready; to which the Pope made answer, that he was very pleased to hear it, but that he did not care to look at them till I had completed my model; afterwards, he would take them all into consideration at the same time.

After a few days I finished my model, and took it to the Pope one morning, when Messer Traiano

[1] *Messer Traiano Alicorno.*

made me wait till he had sent for Micheletto and Pompeo, bidding them make haste and bring their drawings. On their arrival we were introduced, and Micheletto and Pompeo immediately unrolled their papers, which the Pope inspected. The draughtsmen who had been employed were not in the jeweller's trade, and therefore knew nothing about giving their right place to precious stones; and the jewellers, on their side, had not shown them how; for I ought to say that a jeweller, when he has to work with figures, must of necessity understand design, else he cannot produce anything worth looking at: and so it turned out that all of them had stuck that famous diamond in the middle of the breast of God the Father. The Pope, who was an excellent connoisseur, observing this mistake, approved of none of them; and when he had looked at about ten, he flung the rest down, and said to me, who was standing at a distance: "Now show me your model, Benvenuto, so that I may see if you have made the same mistake as those fellows." I came forward, and opened a little round box; whereupon one would have thought that a light from heaven had struck the Pope's eyes. He cried aloud: "If you had been in my own body, you could not have done it better, as this proves. Those men there have found the right way to bring shame upon themselves!" A crowd of great lords pressing round, the Pope pointed out the difference between my model and the drawings. When he had sufficiently commended it, the others standing terrified and stupid before him, he turned to me and said: "I am only

afraid of one thing, and that is of the utmost consequence. Friend Benvenuto, wax is easy to work in; the real difficulty is to execute this in gold." To those words I answered without a moment's hesitation: "Most blessed Father, if I do not work it ten times better than the model, let it be agreed beforehand that you pay me nothing." When they heard this, the noblemen made a great stir, crying out that I was promising too much. Among them was an eminent philosopher, who spoke out in my favour: "From the fine physiognomy and bodily symmetry which I observe in this young man, I predict that he will accomplish what he says, and think that he will even go beyond it." The Pope put in: "And this is my opinion also." Then he called his chamberlain, Messer Traiano, and bade him bring five hundred golden ducats of the Camera.

While we were waiting for the money, the Pope turned once more to gaze at leisure on the dexterous device I had employed for combining the diamond with the figure of God the Father. I had put the diamond exactly in the centre of the piece; and above it God the Father was shown seated, leaning nobly in a sideways attitude,[1] which made a perfect composition, and did not interfere with the stone's effect. Lifting his right hand, he was in the act of giving the benediction. Below the diamond I had placed three children, who, with their arms upraised, were supporting the jewel. One of them, in the middle, was in full relief, the other two in half-relief. All round I set a crowd of cherubs, in divers atti-

[1] *In un certo bel modo svolto. That means: turned aside, not fronting the spectator.*

tudes, adapted to the other gems. A mantle undulated to the wind around the figure of the Father, from the folds of which cherubs peeped out; and there were other ornaments besides which made a very beautiful effect. The work was executed in white stucco on a black stone. When the money came, the Pope gave it me with his own hand, and begged me in the most winning terms to let him have it finished in his own days, adding that this should be to my advantage.

XLV

I took the money and the model home, and was in the utmost impatience to begin my work. After I had laboured diligently for eight days, the Pope sent word by one of his chamberlains, a very great gentleman of Bologna, that I was to come to him and bring what I had got in hand. On the way, the chamberlain, who was the most gentle-mannered person in the Roman court, told me that the Pope not only wanted to see what I was doing, but also intended to intrust me with another task of the highest consequence, which was, in fact, to furnish dies for the money of the Mint; and bade me arm myself beforehand with the answer I should give; in short, he wished me to be prepared, and therefore he had spoken. When we came into the presence, I lost no time in exhibiting the golden plate, upon which I had as yet carved nothing but my figure of God the Father; but this, though only in the rough, displayed a grander style than that of the waxen model. The Pope regarded it with stupefaction, and exclaimed:

"From this moment forward I will believe everything you say." Then loading me with marks of favour, he added: "It is my intention to give you another commission, which, if you feel competent to execute it, I shall have no less at heart than this, or more." He proceeded to tell me that he wished to make dies for the coinage of his realm, and asked me if I had ever tried my hand at such things, and if I had the courage to attempt them. I answered that of courage for the task I had no lack, and that I had seen how dies were made, but that I had not ever made any. There was in the presence a certain Messer Tommaso, of Prato, his Holiness's Datary;[1] and this man, being a friend of my enemies, put in: "Most blessed Father, the favours you are showering upon this young man (and he by nature so extremely overbold) are enough to make him promise you a new world. You have already given him one great task, and now, by adding a greater, you are like to make them clash together." The Pope, in a rage, turned round on him, and told him to mind his own business. Then he commanded me to make the model for a broad doubloon of gold, upon which he wanted a naked Christ with his hands tied, and the inscription *Ecce Homo;* the reverse was to have a Pope and Emperor in the act together of propping up a cross which seemed to fall, and this legend: *Unus spiritus et una fides erat in eis.*

After the Pope had ordered this handsome coin,

[1] *His full name was Tommaso Cortese. The Papal Datario was the chief secretary of the office for requests, petitions, and patents. His title was derived from its being his duty to affix the Datum Romæ to documents. The fees of this office, which was also called Datario, brought in a large revenue to the Papacy.*

Bandinello the sculptor came up; he had not yet been made a knight; and, with his wonted presumption muffled up in ignorance, said: "For these goldsmiths one must make drawings for such fine things as that." I turned round upon him in a moment, and cried out that I did not want his drawings for my art, but that I hoped before very long to give his art some trouble by my drawings. The Pope expressed high satisfaction at these words, and turning to me said: "Go then, my Benvenuto, and devote yourself with spirit to my service, and do not lend an ear to the chattering of these silly fellows."

So I went off, and very quickly made two dies of steel; then I stamped a coin in gold, and one Sunday after dinner took the coin and the dies to the Pope, who, when he saw the piece, was astonished and greatly gratified, not only because my work pleased him excessively, but also because of the rapidity with which I had performed it. For the further satisfaction and amazement of his Holiness, I had brought with me all the old coins which in former times had been made by those able men who served Popes Giulio and Leo; and when I noticed that mine pleased him far better, I drew forth from my bosom a patent,[1] in which I prayed for the post of stamp-master[2] in the Mint. This place was worth six golden crowns a month, in addition to the dies, which were paid at the rate of a ducat for three by the Master of the Mint. The Pope took my patent

[1] *Moto propio. Cellini confuses his petition with the instrument, which he had probably drawn up ready for signature.*

[2] *Maestro delle stampe della zecca, i. e., the artist who made the dies.*

and handed it to the Datary, telling him to lose no time in dispatching the business. The Datary began to put it in his pocket, saying: "Most blessed Father, your Holiness ought not to go so fast; these are matters which deserve some reflection." To this the Pope replied: "I have heard what you have got to say; give me here that patent." He took it, and signed it at once with his own hand; then, giving it back, added: "Now, you have no answer left; see that you dispatch it at once, for this is my pleasure; and Benvenuto's shoes are worth more than the eyes of all those other blockheads." So, having thanked his Holiness, I went back, rejoicing above measure, to my work.

XLVI

I was still working in the shop of Raffaello del Moro. This worthy man had a very beautiful young daughter, with regard to whom he had designs on me; and I, becoming partly aware of his intentions, was very willing; but, while indulging such desires, I made no show of them: on the contrary, I was so discreet in my behaviour that I made him wonder. It so happened that the poor girl was attacked by a disorder in her right hand, which ate into the two bones belonging to the little finger and the next.[1] Owing to her father's carelessness, she had been treated by an ignorant quack-doctor, who predicted that the poor child would be crippled in the whole of her right arm, if even nothing worse should happen. When I noticed the dismay of her father, I

[1] *Ossicina che seguitano il dito, &c. Probably metacarpal bones.*

begged him not to believe all that this ignorant doctor had said. He replied that he had no acquaintance with physicians or with surgeons, and entreated me, if I knew of one, to bring him to the house.[1] I sent at once for a certain Maestro Giacomo of Perugia, a man of great skill in surgery, who examined the poor girl.[2] She was dreadfully frightened, through having gained some inkling of the quack's predictions; whereas, my intelligent doctor declared that she would suffer nothing of consequence, and would be very well able to use her right hand; also that though the two last fingers must remain somewhat weaker than the others, this would be of no inconvenience at all to her. So he began his treatment; and after a few days, when he was going to extract a portion of the diseased bones, her father called for me, and begged me to be present at the operation. Maestro Giacomo was using some coarse steel instruments; and when I observed that he was making little way and at the same time was inflicting severe pain on the patient, I begged him to stop and wait half a quarter of an hour for me. I ran into the shop, and made a little scalping-iron of steel, extremely thin and curved; it cut like a razor. On my return, the surgeon used it, and began to work with so gentle a hand that she felt no pain, and in a short while the operation was over. In consequence of this service, and for other reasons, the worthy man conceived for me as much love, or more, as he had for

[1] *Che gnene avviasse.*

[2] *Giacomo Rastelli was a native of Rimini, but was popularly known as of Perugia, since he had resided long in that city. He was a famous surgeon under several Popes until the year 1566, when he died at Rome, aged seventy-five.*

two male children; and in the meanwhile he attended to the cure of his beautiful young daughter.

I was on terms of the closest intimacy with one Messer Giovanni Gaddi, who was a clerk of the Camera, and a great connoisseur of the arts, although he had no practical acquaintance with any.[1] In his household were a certain Messer Giovanni, a Greek of eminent learning, Messer Lodovico of Fano, no less distinguished as a man of letters, Messer Antonio Allegretti, and Messer Annibale Caro,[2] at that time in his early manhood. Messer Bastiano of Venice, a most excellent painter, and I were admitted to their society; and almost every day we met together in Messer Giovanni's company.[3]

Being aware of this intimacy, the worthy goldsmith Raffaello said to Messer Giovanni: "Good sir, you know me; now I want to marry my daughter to Benvenuto, and can think of no better intermediary than your worship. So I am come to crave your assistance, and to beg you to name for her such dowry from my estate as you may think suitable." The light-headed man hardly let my good friend finish what he had to say, before he put in quite at

[1] *Giovanni Gaddi of the Florentine family was passionately attached to men of art and letters. Yet he seems to have been somewhat disagreeable in personal intercourse; for even Annibale Caro, who owed much to his patronage, and lived for many years in his house, never became attached to him. We shall see how he treated Cellini during a fever.*

[2] *Some poems of Allegretti's survive. He was a man of mark in the literary society of the age. Giovanni Greco may have been a Giovanni Vergezio, who presented Duke Cosimo with some Greek characters of exquisite finish. Lodovico da Fano is mentioned as an excellent Latin scholar. Annibale Caro was one of the most distinguished writers of Italian prose and verse in the later Renaissance. He spent the latter portion of his life in the service of the Farnesi.*

[3] *Messer Bastiano is the celebrated painter Sebastian del Piombo, born* 1485, *died* 1547.

random: "Talk no more about it, Raffaello; you are farther from your object than January from mulberries." The poor man, utterly discouraged, looked about at once for another husband for his girl; while she and the mother and all the family lived on in a bad humour with me. Since I did not know the real cause of this—I imagined they were paying me with bastard coin for the many kindnesses I had shown them—I conceived the thought of opening a workshop of my own in their neighbourhood. Messer Giovanni told me nothing till the girl was married, which happened in a few months.

Meanwhile, I laboured assiduously at the work I was doing for the Pope, and also in the service of the Mint; for his Holiness had ordered another coin, of the value of two carlins, on which his own portrait was stamped, while the reverse bore a figure of Christ upon the waters, holding out his hand to S. Peter, with this inscription, *Quare dubitasti?* My design won such applause that a certain secretary of the Pope, a man of the greatest talent, called Il Sanga,[1] was moved to this remark: "Your Holiness can boast of having a currency superior to any of the ancients in all their glory." The Pope replied: "Benvenuto, for his part, can boast of serving an emperor like me, who is able to discern his merit." I went on at my great piece in gold, showing it frequently to the Pope, who was very eager to see it, and each time expressed greater admiration.

[1] *Battista Sanga, a Roman, secretary to Gianmatteo Giberti, the good Archbishop of Verona, and afterwards to Clement VII. He was a great Latinist, and one of those ecclesiastics who earnestly desired a reform of the Church. He died, poisoned, at an early age.*

XLVII

My brother, at this period, was also in Rome, serving Duke Alessandro, on whom the Pope had recently conferred the Duchy of Penna. This prince kept in his service a multitude of soldiers, worthy fellows, brought up to valour in the school of that famous general Giovanni de' Medici; and among these was my brother, whom the Duke esteemed as highly as the bravest of them. One day my brother went after dinner to the shop of a man called Baccino della Croce in the Banchi, which all those men-at-arms frequented. He had flung himself upon a settee, and was sleeping. Just then the guard of the Bargello passed by;[1] they were taking to prison a certain Captain Cisti, a Lombard, who had also been a member of Giovanni's troop, but was not in the service of the Duke. The captain, Cattivanza degli Strozzi, chanced to be in the same shop;[2] and when Cisti caught sight of him, he whispered: "I was bringing you those crowns I owed; if you want them, come for them before they go with me to prison." Now Cattivanza had a way of putting his neighbours to the push, not caring to hazard his own per-

[1] *The Bargello was the chief constable or sheriff in Italian towns. I shall call him Bargello always in my translation, since any English equivalent would be misleading. He did the rough work of policing the city, and was consequently a mark for all the men of spirit who disliked being kept in order. Giovio, in his Life of Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, quite gravely relates how it was the highest ambition of young Romans of spirit to murder the Bargello. He mentions, in particular, a certain Pietro Margano, who had acquired great fame and popularity by killing the Bargello of his day, one Cencio, in the Campo di Fiore. This man became an outlaw, and was favourably received by Cardinal Colonna, then at war with Clement VII.*

[2] *His baptismal name was Bernardo. Cattivanza was a nickname. He fought bravely for Florence in the siege.*

son. So, finding there around him several young fellows of the highest daring, more eager than apt for so serious an enterprise, he bade them catch up Captain Cisti and get the money from him, and if the guard resisted, overpower the men, provided they had pluck enough to do so.

The young men were but four, and all four of them without a beard. The first was called Bertino Aldobrandi, another Anguillotto of Lucca; I cannot recall the names of the rest. Bertino had been trained like a pupil by my brother; and my brother felt the most unbounded love for him. So then, off dashed the four brave lads, and came up with the guard of the Bargello—upwards of fifty constables, counting pikes, arquebuses, and two-handed swords. After a few words they drew their weapons, and the four boys so harried the guard, that if Captain Cattivanza had but shown his face, without so much as drawing, they would certainly have put the whole pack to flight. But delay spoiled all; for Bertino received some ugly wounds and fell; at the same time, Anguillotto was also hit in the right arm, and being unable to use his sword, got out of the fray as well as he was able. The others did the same. Bertino Aldobrandi was lifted from the ground seriously injured.

XLVIII

While these things were happening, we were all at table; for that morning we had dined more than an hour later than usual. On hearing the commotion, one of the old man's sons, the elder, rose from table

to go and look at the scuffle. He was called Giovanni; and I said to him: "For Heaven's sake, don't go! In such matters one is always certain to lose, while there is nothing to be gained." His father spoke to like purpose: "Pray, my son, don't go!" But the lad, without heeding any one, ran down the stairs. Reaching the Banchi, where the great scrimmage was, and seeing Bertino lifted from the ground, he ran towards home, and met my brother Cecchino on the way, who asked what was the matter. Though some of the bystanders signed to Giovanni not to tell Cecchino, he cried out like a madman how it was that Bertino Aldobrandi had been killed by the guard. My poor brother gave vent to a bellow which might have been heard ten miles away. Then he turned to Giovanni: "Ah me! but could you tell me which of those men killed him for me?"[1] Giovanni said, yes, that it was a man who had a big two-handed sword, with a blue feather in his bonnet. My poor brother rushed ahead, and having recognised the homicide by those signs, he threw himself with all his dash and spirit into the middle of the band, and before his man could turn on guard, ran him right through the guts, and with the sword's hilt thrust him to the ground. Then he turned upon the rest with such energy and daring, that his one arm was on the point of putting the whole band to flight, had it not been that, while wheeling round to strike an arquebusier, this man fired in self-defence, and hit the brave unfortunate young fellow above the knee

[1] *Oimè, saprestimi tu dire che di quelli me l'ha morto? The me is so emphatic, that, though it makes poor English, I have preserved it in my version.*

of his right leg. While he lay stretched upon the ground, the constables scrambled off in disorder as fast as they were able, lest a pair to my brother should arrive upon the scene.

Noticing that the tumult was not subsiding, I too rose from table, and girding on my sword—for everybody wore one then—I went to the bridge of Sant' Agnolo, where I saw a group of several men assembled. On my coming up and being recognised by some of them, they gave way before me, and showed me what I least of all things wished to see, albeit I made mighty haste to view the sight. On the instant I did not know Cecchino, since he was wearing a different suit of clothes from that in which I had lately seen him. Accordingly, he recognised me first, and said: "Dearest brother, do not be upset by my grave accident; it is only what might be expected in my profession: get me removed from here at once, for I have but few hours to live." They had acquainted me with the whole event while he was speaking, in brief words befitting such occasion. So I answered: "Brother, this is the greatest sorrow and the greatest trial that could happen to me in the whole course of my life. But be of good cheer; for before you lose sight of him who did the mischief, you shall see yourself revenged by my hand." Our words on both sides were to the purport, but of the shortest.

XLIX

The guard was now about fifty paces from us; for Maffio, their officer, had made some of them turn

ALESSANDRO DE' MEDICI
(VASARI)

back to take up the corporal my brother killed. Accordingly, I quickly traversed that short space, wrapped in my cape, which I had tightened round me, and came up with Maffio, whom I should most certainly have murdered, for there were plenty of people round, and I had wound my way among them. With the rapidity of lightning, I had half drawn my sword from the sheath, when Berlinghier Berlinghieri, a young man of the greatest daring and my good friend, threw himself from behind upon my arms; he had four other fellows of like kidney with him, who cried out to Maffio: "Away with you, for this man here alone was killing you!" He asked: "Who is he?" and they answered: "Own brother to the man you see there." Without waiting to hear more, he made haste for Torre di Nona;[1] and they said: "Benvenuto, we prevented you against your will, but did it for your good; now let us go to succour him who must die shortly." Accordingly, we turned and went back to my brother, whom I had at once conveyed into a house. The doctors who were called in consultation, treated him with medicaments, but could not decide to amputate the leg, which might perhaps have saved him.

As soon as his wound had been dressed, Duke Alessandro appeared and most affectionately greeted him. My brother had not as yet lost consciousness; so he said to the Duke: "My lord, this only grieves me, that your Excellency is losing a servant than whom you may perchance find men more valiant in

[1] *The Torre di Nona was one of the principal prisons in Rome, used especially for criminals condemned to death.*

the profession of arms, but none more lovingly and loyally devoted to your service than I have been." The Duke bade him do all he could to keep alive; for the rest, he well knew him to be a man of worth and courage. He then turned to his attendants, ordering them to see that the brave young fellow wanted for nothing.

When he was gone, my brother lost blood so copiously, for nothing could be done to stop it, that he went off his head, and kept raving all the following night, with the exception that once, when they wanted to give him the communion, he said: "You would have done well to confess me before; now it is impossible that I should receive the divine sacrament in this already ruined frame; it will be enough if I partake of it by the divine virtue of the eyesight, whereby it shall be transmitted into my immortal soul, which only prays to Him for mercy and forgiveness." Having spoken thus, the host was elevated; but he straightway relapsed into the same delirious ravings as before, pouring forth a torrent of the most terrible frenzies and horrible imprecations that the mind of man could imagine; nor did he cease once all that night until the day broke.

When the sun appeared above our horizon, he turned to me and said: "Brother, I do not wish to stay here longer, for these fellows will end by making me do something tremendous, which may cause them to repent of the annoyance they have given me." Then he kicked out both his legs—the injured limb we had enclosed in a very heavy box—and made as though he would fling it across a horse's

back. Turning his face round to me, he called out thrice, "Farewell, farewell!" and with the last word that most valiant spirit passed away.

At the proper hour, toward nightfall, I had him buried with due ceremony in the church of the Florentines; and afterwards I erected to his memory a very handsome monument of marble, upon which I caused trophies and banners to be carved. I must not omit to mention that one of his friends had asked him who the man was that had killed him, and if he could recognise him; to which he answered that he could, and gave his description. My brother, indeed, attempted to prevent this coming to my ears; but I got it very well impressed upon my mind, as will appear in the sequel.[1]

L

Returning to the monument, I should relate that certain famous men of letters, who knew my brother, composed for me an epitaph, telling me that the noble young man deserved it. The inscription ran thus:

"*Francisco Cellino Florentino, qui quod in teneris annis ad Ioannem Medicem ducem plures victorias retulit et signifer fuit, facile documentum dedit quantæ fortitudinis et consilii vir futurus erat, ni crudelis fati archibuso transfossus, quinto ætatis lustro jaceret, Benvenutus frater posuit. Obiit die* XXVII *Maii* MD. XXIX."

He was twenty-five years of age; and since the soldiers called him Cecchino del Piffero,[2] his real

[1] *Varchi, in his Storia Fiorentina, lib. xi., gives a short account of Cecchino Cellini's death in Rome, mentioning also Bertino Aldobrandi, in the attempt to revenge whom he lost his life.*

[2] *That is, Frank, the Fifer's son.*

name being Giovanfrancesco Cellini, I wanted to engrave the former, by which he was commonly known, under the armorial bearings of our family. This name then I had cut in fine antique characters, all of which were broken save the first and last. I was asked by the learned men who had composed that beautiful epitaph, wherefore I used these broken letters; and my answer was, because the marvellous framework of his body was spoiled and dead; and the reason why the first and last remained entire was, that the first should symbolise the great gift God had given him, namely, of a human soul, inflamed with his divinity, the which hath never broken, while the second represented the glorious renown of his brave actions. The thought gave satisfaction, and several persons have since availed themselves of my device. Close to the name I had the coat of us Cellini carved upon the stone, altering it in some particulars. In Ravenna, which is a most ancient city, there exist Cellini of our name in the quality of very honourable gentry, who bear a lion rampant or upon a field of azure, holding a lily gules in his dexter paw, with a label in chief and three little lilies or.[1] These are the true arms of the Cellini. My father showed me a shield as ours which had the paw only, together with the other bearings; but I should prefer to follow those of the Cellini of Ravenna, which I have described above. Now to return to what I caused to be engraved upon my brother's tomb: it

[1] *I believe Cellini meant here to write "on a chief argent a label of four points, and three lilies gules." He has tricked the arms thus in a MS. of the Palatine Library. See Leclanché, p.* 103, *see also Piatti, vol. i. p.* 233, *and Plon, p.* 2.

was the lion's paw, but instead of a lily, I made the lion hold an axe, with the field of the scutcheon quartered; and I put the axe in solely that I might not be unmindful to revenge him.

LI

I went on applying myself with the utmost diligence upon the gold-work for Pope Clement's button. He was very eager to have it, and used to send for me two or three times a week, in order to inspect it; and his delight in the work always increased. Often would he rebuke and scold me, as it were, for the great grief in which my brother's loss had plunged me; and one day, observing me more downcast and out of trim than was proper, he cried aloud: "Benvenuto, oh! I did not know that you were mad. Have you only just learned that there is no remedy against death? One would think that you were trying to run after him." When I left the presence, I continued working at the jewel and the dies[1] for the Mint; but I also took to watching the arquebusier who shot my brother, as though he had been a girl I was in love with. The man had formerly been in the light cavalry, but afterwards had joined the arquebusiers as one of the Bargello's corporals; and what increased my rage was that he had used these boastful words: "If it had not been for me, who killed that brave young man, the least trifle of delay would have resulted in his putting us all to flight with great disaster." When I saw that the fever

[1] *Ferri. I have translated this word dies; but it seems to mean all the coining instruments, stampe or conii being the dies proper.*

caused by always seeing him about was depriving me of sleep and appetite, and was bringing me by degrees to sorry plight, I overcame my repugnance to so low and not quite praiseworthy an enterprise, and made my mind up one evening to rid myself of the torment. The fellow lived in a house near a place called Torre Sanguigua, next door to the lodging of one of the most fashionable courtesans in Rome, named Signora Antea. It had just struck twenty-four, and he was standing at the house-door, with his sword in hand, having risen from supper. With great address I stole up to him, holding a large Pistojan dagger,[1] and dealt him a back-handed stroke, with which I meant to cut his head clean off; but as he turned round very suddenly, the blow fell upon the point of his left shoulder and broke the bone. He sprang up, dropped his sword, half-stunned with the great pain, and took to flight. I followed after, and in four steps caught him up, when I lifted my dagger above his head, which he was holding very low, and hit him in the back exactly at the juncture of the nape-bone and the neck. The poniard entered this point so deep into the bone, that, though I used all my strength to pull it out, I was not able. For just at that moment four soldiers with drawn swords sprang out from Antea's lodging, and obliged me to set hand to my own sword to defend my life. Leaving the poniard then, I made off, and fearing I might be recognised, took refuge in the palace of Duke Alessandro, which was between Piazza Navona and the Rotunda.[2]

[1] *Pugnal pistolese: it came in time to mean a cutlass.*

[2] *That is, the Pantheon.*

On my arrival, I asked to see the Duke; who told me that, if I was alone, I need only keep quiet and have no further anxiety, but go on working at the jewel which the Pope had set his heart on, and stay eight days indoors. He gave this advice the more securely, because the soldiers had now arrived who interrupted the completion of my deed; they held the dagger in their hand, and were relating how the matter happened, and the great trouble they had to pull the weapon from the neck and head-bone of the man, whose name they did not know. Just then Giovan Bandini came up, and said to them:[1] "That poniard is mine, and I lent it to Benvenuto, who was bent on revenging his brother." The soldiers were profuse in their expressions of regret at having interrupted me, although my vengeance had been amply satisfied.

More than eight days elapsed, and the Pope did not send for me according to his custom. Afterwards he summoned me through his chamberlain, the Bolognese nobleman I have already mentioned, who let me, in his own modest manner, understand that his Holiness knew all, but was very well inclined toward me, and that I had only to mind my work and keep quiet. When we reached the presence, the Pope cast so menacing a glance towards me, that the mere look of his eyes made me tremble. After-

[1] *Bandini bears a distinguished name in Florentine annals. He served Duke Alessandro in affairs of much importance; but afterwards he betrayed the interests of his master, Duke Cosimo, in an embassy to Charles V. in 1543. It seems that he had then been playing into the hands of Filippo Strozzi, for which offence he passed fifteen years in a dungeon. See Varchi and Segni; also Montazio's Prigionieri del Mastio di Volterra, cap. vii.*

wards, upon examining my work, his countenance cleared, and he began to praise me beyond measure, saying that I had done a vast amount in a short time. Then, looking me straight in the face, he added: "Now that you are cured, Benvenuto, take heed how you live."[1] I, who understood his meaning, promised that I would. Immediately upon this, I opened a very fine shop in the Banchi, opposite Raffaello, and there I finished the jewel after the lapse of a few months.

LII

The Pope had sent me all those precious stones, except the diamond, which was pawned to certain Genoese bankers for some pressing need he had of money. The rest were in my custody, together with a model of the diamond. I had five excellent journeymen, and in addition to the great piece, I was engaged on several jobs; so that my shop contained property of much value in jewels, gems, and gold and silver. I kept a shaggy dog, very big and handsome, which Duke Alessandro gave me; the beast was capital as a retriever, since he brought me every sort of birds and game I shot, but he also served most admirably for a watchdog. It happened, as was natural at the age of twenty-nine, that I had taken into my service a girl of great beauty and grace, whom I used as a model in my art, and who was also complaisant of her personal favours to me. Such being the case, I occupied an apartment far away

[1] *This was the Pope's hint to Cellini that he was aware of the murder he had just committed.*

from my workmen's rooms, as well as from the shop; and this communicated by a little dark passage with the maid's bedroom. I used frequently to pass the night with her; and though I sleep as lightly as ever yet did man upon this earth, yet, after indulgence in sexual pleasure, my slumber is sometimes very deep and heavy.

So it chanced one night: for I must say that a thief, under the pretext of being a goldsmith, had spied on me, and cast his eyes upon the precious stones, and made a plan to steal them. Well, then, this fellow broke into the shop, where he found a quantity of little things in gold and silver. He was engaged in bursting open certain boxes to get at the jewels he had noticed, when my dog jumped upon him, and put him to much trouble to defend himself with his sword. The dog, unable to grapple with an armed man, ran several times through the house, and rushed into the rooms of the journeymen, which had been left open because of the great heat. When he found they paid no heed to his loud barking, he dragged their bed-clothes off; and when they still heard nothing, he pulled first one and then another by the arm till he roused them, and, barking furiously, ran before to show them where he wanted them to go. At last it became clear that they refused to follow; for the traitors, cross at being disturbed, threw stones and sticks at him; and this they could well do, for I had ordered them to keep all night a lamp alight there; and in the end they shut their rooms tight; so the dog, abandoning all hope of aid from such rascals, set out alone again on his adventure. He

ran down, and not finding the thief in the shop, flew after him. When he got at him, he tore the cape off his back. It would have gone hard with the fellow had he not called for help to certain tailors, praying them for God's sake to save him from a mad dog; and they, believing what he said, jumped out and drove the dog off with much trouble.

After sunrise my workmen went into the shop, and saw that it had been broken open and all the boxes smashed. They began to scream at the top of their voices: "Ah, woe is me! Ah, woe is me!" The clamour woke me, and I rushed out in a panic. Appearing thus before them, they cried out: "Alas to us! for we have been robbed by some one, who has broken and borne everything away!" These words wrought so forcibly upon my mind that I dared not go to my big chest and look if it still held the jewels of the Pope. So intense was the anxiety, that I seemed to lose my eyesight, and told them they themselves must unlock the chest, and see how many of the Pope's gems were missing. The fellows were all of them in their shirts; and when, on opening the chest, they saw the precious stones and my work with them, they took heart of joy and shouted: "There is no harm done; your piece and all the stones are here; but the thief has left us naked to the shirt, because last night, by reason of the burning heat, we took our clothes off in the shop and left them here." Recovering my senses, I thanked God, and said: "Go and get yourselves new suits of clothes; I will pay when I hear at leisure how the whole thing happened." What caused me the most pain, and made

me lose my senses, and take fright—so contrary to my real nature—was the dread lest peradventure folk should fancy I had trumped a story of the robber up to steal the jewels. It had already been said to Pope Clement by one of his most trusted servants, and by others, that is, by Francesco del Nero, Zana de' Biliotti his accountant, the Bishop of Vasona, and several such men:[1] "Why, most blessed Father, do you confide gems of that vast value to a young fellow, who is all fire, more passionate for arms than for his art, and not yet thirty years of age?" The Pope asked in answer if any one of them knew that I had done aught to justify such suspicions. Whereto Francesco del Nero, his treasurer, replied:[2] "No, most blessed Father, because he has not as yet had an opportunity." Whereto the Pope rejoined: "I regard him as a thoroughly honest man; and if I saw with my own eyes some crime he had committed, I should not believe it." This was the man who[3] caused me the greatest torment, and who suddenly came up before my mind.

After telling the young men to provide themselves with fresh clothes, I took my piece, together with the gems, setting them as well as I could in their proper places, and went off at once with them to the

[1] *Of these people, we can trace the Bishop of Vasona. He was Girolamo Schio or Schedo, a native of Vicenza, the confidential agent and confessor of Clement VII., who obtained the See of Vaison in the county of Avignon in 1523, and died at Rome in 1533. His successor in the bishopric was Tommaso Cortesi, the Datary, mentioned above.*

[2] *Varchi gives a very ugly account of this man, Francesco del Nero, who was nicknamed the Crà del Piccadiglio, in his History of Florence, book iii. "In the whole city of Florence there never was born, in my belief, a man of such irreligion or of such sordid avarice." Giovio confirms the statement.*

[3] *Questo fu quello che. This may be neuter: This was the circumstance which.*

Pope. Francesco del Nero had already told him something of the trouble in my shop, and had put suspicions in his head. So then, taking the thing rather ill than otherwise, he shot a furious glance upon me, and cried haughtily: "What have you come to do here? What is up?" "Here are all your precious stones, and not one of them is missing." At this the Pope's face cleared, and he said: "So then, you're welcome." I showed him the piece, and while he was inspecting it, I related to him the whole story of the thief and of my agony, and what had been my greatest trouble in the matter. During this speech, he oftentimes turned round to look me sharply in the eyes; and Francesco del Nero being also in the presence, this seemed to make him half sorry that he had not guessed the truth. At last, breaking into laughter at the long tale I was telling, he sent me off with these words: "Go, and take heed to be an honest man, as indeed I know that you are."

LIII

I went on working assiduously at the button, and at the same time laboured for the Mint, when certain pieces of false money got abroad in Rome, stamped with my own dies. They were brought at once to the Pope, who, hearing things against me, said to Giacopo Balducci, the Master of the Mint, "Take every means in your power to find the criminal; for we are sure that Benvenuto is an honest fellow." That traitor of a master, being in fact my enemy, replied: "Would God, most blessed Father, that it may turn out as you say; for we have some proofs against

him." Upon this the Pope turned to the Governor of Rome, and bade him see he found the malefactor. During those days the Pope sent for me, and leading cautiously in conversation to the topic of the coins, asked me at the fitting moment: "Benvenuto, should you have the heart to coin false money?" To this I replied that I thought I could do so better than all the rascals who gave their minds to such vile work; for fellows who practise lewd trades of that sort are not capable of earning money, nor are they men of much ability. I, on the contrary, with my poor wits could gain enough to keep me comfortably; for when I set dies for the Mint, each morning before dinner I put at least three crowns into my pocket; this was the customary payment for the dies, and the Master of the Mint bore me a grudge, because he would have liked to have them cheaper; so then, what I earned with God's grace and the world's, sufficed me, and by coining false money I should not have made so much. The Pope very well perceived my drift; and whereas he had formerly given orders that they should see I did not fly from Rome, he now told them to look well about and have no heed of me, seeing he was ill-disposed to anger me, and in this way run the risk of losing me. The officials who received these orders were certain clerks of the Camera, who made the proper search, as was their duty, and soon found the rogue. He was a stamper in the service of the Mint, named Cesare Macherone, and a Roman citizen. Together with this man they detected a metal-founder of the Mint.[1]

[1] *The word in Cellini is ovolatore di zecca.*

LIV

On that very day, as I was passing through the Piazza Navona, and had my fine retriever with me, just when we came opposite the gate of the Bargello, my dog flew barking loudly inside the door upon a youth, who had been arrested at the suit of a man called Donnino (a goldsmith from Parma, and a former pupil of Caradosso), on the charge of having robbed him. The dog strove so violently to tear the fellow to pieces, that the constables were moved to pity. It so happened that he was pleading his own cause with boldness, and Donnino had not evidence enough to support the accusation; and what was more, one of the corporals of the guard, a Genoese, was a friend of the young man's father. The upshot was that, what with the dog and with those other circumstances, they were on the point of releasing their prisoner. When I came up, the dog had lost all fear of sword or staves, and was flying once more at the young man; so they told me if I did not call the brute off they would kill him. I held him back as well as I was able; but just then the fellow, in the act of readjusting his cape, let fall some paper packets from the hood, which Donnino recognised as his property. I too recognised a little ring; whereupon I called out: "This is the thief who broke into my shop and robbed it; and therefore my dog knows him;" then I loosed the dog, who flew again upon the robber. On this the fellow craved for mercy, promising to give back whatever he possessed of mine. When I had secured the dog, he proceeded

to restore the gold and silver and the rings which he had stolen from me, and twenty-five crowns in addition. Then he cried once more to me for pity. I told him to make his peace with God, for I should do him neither good nor evil. So I returned to my business; and a few days afterwards, Cesare Macherone, the false coiner, was hanged in the Banchi opposite the Mint; his accomplice was sent to the galleys; the Genoese thief was hanged in the Campo di Fiore, while I remained in better repute as an honest man than I had enjoyed before.

LV

When I had nearly finished my piece, there happened that terrible inundation which flooded the whole of Rome.[1] I waited to see what would happen; the day was well-nigh spent, for the clocks struck twenty-two, and the water went on rising formidably. Now the front of my house and shop faced the Banchi, but the back was several yards higher, because it turned toward Monte Giordano; accordingly, bethinking me first of my own safety and in the next place of my honour, I filled my pockets with the jewels, and gave the gold-piece into the custody of my workmen, and then descended barefoot from the back-windows, and waded as well as I could until I reached Monte Cavallo. There I sought out Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, and Bastiano Veneziano, the painter. To the former I confided the precious stones, to keep in safety: he had the same regard for me as though I

[1] *This took place on the 8th and 9th October* 1530.

had been his brother. A few days later, when the rage of the river was spent, I returned to my workshop, and finished the piece with such good fortune, through God's grace and my own great industry, that it was held to be the finest masterpiece which had been ever seen in Rome.[1]

When then I took it to the Pope, he was insatiable in praising me, and said: "Were I but a wealthy emperor, I would give my Benvenuto as much land as his eyes could survey; yet being nowadays but needy bankrupt potentates, we will at any rate give him bread enough to satisfy his modest wishes." I let the Pope run on to the end of his rhodomontade,[2] and then asked him for a mace-bearer's place which happened to be vacant. He replied that he would grant me something of far greater consequence. I begged his Holiness to bestow this little thing on me meanwhile by way of earnest. He began to laugh, and said he was willing, but that he did not wish me to serve, and that I must make some arrangement with the other mace-bearers to be exempted. He would allow them through me a certain favour, for which they had already petitioned, namely, the right of recovering their fees at law. This was accordingly done; and that mace-bearer's office brought me in little less than 200 crowns a year.[3]

[1] *This famous masterpiece was preserved in the Castle of S. Angelo during the Papal Government of Rome. It was brought out on Christmas, Easter, and S. Peter's days.*

[2] *Quella sua smania di parole.*

[3] *Cellini received this post among the Mazzieri (who walked like beadles before the Pope) on April* 14, 1531. *He resigned it in favour of Pietro Cornaro of Venice in* 1535.

BACCIO BANDINELLO
(BY HIMSELF)

LVI

I continued to work for the Pope, executing now one trifle and now another, when he commissioned me to design a chalice of exceeding richness. So I made both drawing and model for the piece. The latter was constructed of wood and wax. Instead of the usual top, I fashioned three figures of a fair size in the round; they represented Faith, Hope, and Charity. Corresponding to these, at the base of the cup, were three circular histories in bas-relief. One was the Nativity of Christ, the second the Resurrection, and the third S. Peter crucified head downwards; for thus I had received commission. While I had this work in hand, the Pope was often pleased to look at it; wherefore, observing that his Holiness had never thought again of giving me anything, and knowing that a post in the Piombo was vacant, I asked for this one evening. The good Pope, quite oblivious of his extravagances at the termination of the last piece, said to me: "That post in the Piombo is worth more than 800 crowns a year, so that if I gave it you, you would spend your time in scratching your paunch,[1] and your magnificent handicraft would be lost, and I should bear the blame." I replied at once as thus: "Cats of a good breed mouse better when they are fat than starving; and likewise honest men who possess some talent, exercise it to far nobler purport when they have the wherewithal to live abundantly; wherefore princes who provide such folk

[1] *Grattare il corpo, which I have translated scratch your paunch, is equivalent to twirl your thumbs.*

with competences, let your Holiness take notice, are watering the roots of genius; for genius and talent, at their birth, come into this world lean and scabby; and your Holiness should also know that I never asked for the place with the hope of getting it. Only too happy I to have that miserable post of mace-bearer. On the other I built but castles in the air. Your Holiness will do well, since you do not care to give it me, to bestow it on a man of talent who deserves it, and not upon some fat ignoramus who will spend his time scratching his paunch, if I may quote your Holiness's own words. Follow the example of Pope Giulio's illustrious memory, who conferred an office of the same kind upon Bramante, that most admirable architect."

Immediately on finishing this speech, I made my bow, and went off in a fury. Then Bastiano Veneziano the painter approached, and said: "Most blessed Father, may your Holiness be willing to grant it to one who works assiduously in the exercise of some talent; and as your Holiness knows that I am diligent in my art, I beg that I may be thought worthy of it." The Pope replied: "That devil Benvenuto will not brook rebuke. I was inclined to give it him, but it is not right to be so haughty with a Pope. Therefore I do not well know what I am to do." The Bishop of Vasona then came up, and put in a word for Bastiano, saying: "Most blessed Father, Benvenuto is but young; and a sword becomes him better than a friar's frock. Let your Holiness give the place to this ingenious person Bastiano. Some time or other you will be able to bestow on Benve-

nuto a good thing, perhaps more suitable to him than this would be." Then the Pope, turning to Messer Bartolommeo Valori, told him: "When next you meet Benvenuto, let him know from me that it was he who got that office in the Piombo for Bastiano the painter, and add that he may reckon on obtaining the next considerable place that falls; meanwhile let him look to his behaviour, and finish my commissions." [1]

The following evening, two hours after sundown, I met Messer Bartolommeo Valori[2] at the corner of the Mint; he was preceded by two torches, and was going in haste to the Pope, who had sent for him. On my taking off my hat, he stopped and called me, and reported in the most friendly manner all the messages the Pope had sent me. I replied that I should complete my work with greater diligence and application than any I had yet attempted, but without the least hope of having any reward whatever from the Pope. Messer Bartolommeo reproved me, saying that this was not the way in which one ought to reply to the advances of a Pope. I answered that I should be mad to reply otherwise—mad if I based my hopes on such promises, being certain to get nothing. So I departed, and went off to my business.

[1] *The office of the Piombo in Rome was a bureau in which leaden seals were appended to Bulls and instruments of state. It remained for a long time in the hands of the Cistercians; but it used also to be conferred on laymen, among whom were Bramante and Sebastiano del Piombo. When the latter obtained it, he neglected his art and gave himself up to "scratching his paunch," as Cellini predicted.*

[2] *Bartolommeo or Baccio Valori, a devoted adherent of the Medici, played an important part in Florentine history. He was Clement's commissary to the Prince of Orange during the siege. Afterwards, feeling himself ill repaid for his services, he joined Filippo Strozzi in his opposition to the Medicean rule, and was beheaded in 1537, together with his son and a nephew.*

Messer Bartolommeo must have reported my audacious speeches to the Pope, and more perhaps than I had really said; for his Holiness waited above two months before he sent to me, and during that while nothing would have induced me to go uncalled for to the palace. Yet he was dying with impatience to see the chalice, and commissioned Messer Ruberto Pucci to give heed to what I was about.[1] That right worthy fellow came daily to visit me, and always gave me some kindly word, which I returned. The time was drawing nigh now for the Pope to travel toward Bologna;[2] so at last, perceiving that I did not mean to come to him, he made Messer Ruberto bid me bring my work, that he might see how I was getting on. Accordingly, I took it; and having shown, as the piece itself proved, that the most important part was finished, I begged him to advance me five hundred crowns, partly on account, and partly because I wanted gold to complete the chalice. The Pope said: "Go on, go on at work till it is finished." I answered, as I took my leave, that I would finish it if he paid me the money. And so I went away.

### LVII

When the Pope took his journey to Bologna, he left Cardinal Salviati as Legate of Rome, and gave him commission to push the work that I was doing for-

[1] *Roberto Pucci was another of the devoted Medicean partisans who remained true to his colours. He sat among the forty-eight senators of Alessandro, and was made a Cardinal by Paul III. in* 1534.

[2] *On November* 18, 1532, *Clement went to meet Charles V. at Bologna, where, in* 1529, *he had already given him the Imperial crown.*

ward, adding: "Benvenuto is a fellow who esteems his own great talents but slightly, and us less; look to it then that you keep him always going, so that I may find the chalice finished on my return."

That beast of a Cardinal sent for me after eight days, bidding me bring the piece up. On this I went to him without the piece. No sooner had I shown my face, than he called out: "Where is that onion-stew of yours?[1] Have you got it ready?" I answered: "O most reverend Monsignor, I have not got my onion-stew ready, nor shall I make it ready, unless you give me onions to concoct it with." At these words, the Cardinal, who looked more like a donkey than a man, turned uglier by half than he was naturally; and wanting at once to cut the matter short, cried out: "I'll send you to a galley, and then perhaps you'll have the grace[2] to go on with your labour." The bestial manners of the man made me a beast too; and I retorted: "Monsignor, send me to the galleys when I've done deeds worthy of them; but for my present laches, I snap my fingers at your galleys: and what is more, I tell you that, just because of you, I will not set hand further to my piece. Don't send for me again, for I won't appear, no, not if you summon me by the police."

After this, the good Cardinal tried several times to let me know that I ought to go on working, and to bring him what I was doing to look at. I only told his messengers: "Say to Monsignor that he must

[1] *Cipollata. Literally, a show of onions and pumpkins; metaphorically, a mess, gallimaufry*

[2] *Arai di grazia di. I am not sure whether I have given the right shade of meaning in the text above. It may mean: You will be permitted.*

send me onions, if he wants me to get my stew ready." Nor gave I ever any other answer; so that he threw up the commission in despair.

LVIII

The Pope came back from Bologna, and sent at once for me, because the Cardinal had written the worst he could of my affairs in his despatches. He was in the hottest rage imaginable, and bade me come upon the instant with my piece. I obeyed. Now, while the Pope was staying at Bologna, I had suffered from an attack of inflammation in the eyes, so painful that I scarce could go on living for the torment; and this was the chief reason why I had not carried out my work. The trouble was so serious that I expected for certain to be left without my eyesight; and I had reckoned up the sum on which I could subsist, if I were blind for life. Upon the way to the Pope, I turned over in my mind what I should put forward to excuse myself for not having been able to advance his work. I thought that while he was inspecting the chalice, I might tell him of my personal embarrassments. However, I was unable to do so; for when I arrived in the presence, he broke out coarsely at me: "Come here with your work; is it finished?" I displayed it; and his temper rising, he exclaimed: "In God's truth I tell thee, thou that makest it thy business to hold no man in regard, that, were it not for decency and order, I would have thee chucked together with thy work there out of windows." Accordingly, when I perceived that the Pope had become no better than a vicious beast, my chief anxi-

ety was how I could manage to withdraw from his presence. So, while he went on bullying, I tucked the piece beneath my cape, and muttered under my breath: "The whole world could not compel a blind man to execute such things as these." Raising his voice still higher, the Pope shouted: "Come here; what say'st thou?" I stayed in two minds, whether or not to dash at full speed down the staircase; then I took my decision and threw myself upon my knees, shouting as loudly as I could, for he too had not ceased from shouting: "If an infirmity has blinded me, am I bound to go on working?" He retorted: "You saw well enough to make your way hither, and I don't believe one word of what you say." I answered, for I noticed he had dropped his voice a little: "Let your Holiness inquire of your physician, and you will find the truth out." He said: "So ho! softly; at leisure we shall hear if what you say is so." Then, perceiving that he was willing to give me hearing, I added: "I am convinced that the only cause of this great trouble which has happened to me is Cardinal Salviati; for he sent to me immediately after your Holiness's departure, and when I presented myself, he called my work a stew of onions, and told me he would send me to complete it in a galley; and such was the effect upon me of his knavish words, that in my passion I felt my face in flame, and so intolerable a heat attacked my eyes that I could not find my own way home. Two days afterwards, cataracts fell on both my eyes; I quite lost my sight, and after your Holiness's departure I have been unable to work at all."

Rising from my knees, I left the presence without further license. It was afterwards reported to me that the Pope had said: "One can give commissions, but not the prudence to perform them. I did not tell the Cardinal to go so brutally about this business.[1] If it is true that he is suffering from his eyes, of which I shall get information through my doctor, one ought to make allowance for him." A great gentleman, intimate with the Pope, and a man of very distinguished parts, happened to be present. He asked who I was, using terms like these: "Most blessed Father, pardon if I put a question. I have seen you yield at one and the same time to the hottest anger I ever observed, and then to the warmest compassion; so I beg your Holiness to tell me who the man is; for if he is a person worthy to be helped, I can teach him a secret which may cure him of that infirmity." The Pope replied: "He is the greatest artist who was ever born in his own craft; one day, when we are together, I will show you some of his marvellous works, and the man himself to boot; and I shall be pleased if we can see our way toward doing something to assist him." Three days after this, the Pope sent for me after dinner-time, and I found that great noble in the presence. On my arrival, the Pope had my cope-button brought, and I in the meantime drew forth my chalice. The nobleman said, on looking at it, that he had never seen a more stupendous piece of work. When the button came, he was still more struck with wonder: and looking me straight in the face, he added: "The man is young, I trow,

[1] *Che mettessi tanta mazza.*

to be so able in his art, and still apt enough to learn much." He then asked me what my name was. I answered: "My name is Benvenuto." He replied: "And Benvenuto shall I be this day to you. Take flower-de-luces, stalk, blossom, root, together; then decoct them over a slack fire; and with the liquid bathe your eyes several times a day; you will most certainly be cured of that weakness; but see that you purge first, and then go forward with the lotion." The Pope gave me some kind words, and so I went away half satisfied.

LIX

It was true indeed that I had got the sickness; but I believe I caught it from that fine young servant-girl whom I was keeping when my house was robbed. The French disease, for it was that, remained in me more than four months dormant before it showed itself, and then it broke out over my whole body at one instant. It was not like what one commonly observes, but covered my flesh with certain blisters, of the size of sixpences, and rose-coloured. The doctors would not call it the French disease, albeit I told them why I thought it was that. I went on treating myself according to their methods, but derived no benefit. At last, then, I resolved on taking the wood, against the advice of the first physicians in Rome;[1] and I took it with the most scrupulous discipline and rules of abstinence that could be thought of; and after a few days, I perceived in me a great amendment. The result was that at the end of fifty days

[1] *That is, Guiacum, called by the Italians legno santo.*

I was cured and as sound as a fish in the water.

Some time afterwards I sought to mend my shattered health, and with this view I betook myself to shooting when the winter came in. That amusement, however, led me to expose myself to wind and water, and to staying out in marsh-lands; so that, after a few days, I fell a hundred times more ill than I had been before. I put myself once more under doctors' orders, and attended to their directions, but grew always worse. When the fever fell upon me, I resolved on having recourse again to the wood; but the doctors forbade it, saying that if I took it with the fever on me, I should not have a week to live. However, I made my mind up to disobey their orders, observed the same diet as I had formerly adopted, and after drinking the decoction four days, was wholly rid of fever. My health improved enormously; and while I was following this cure, I went on always working at the models of the chalice. I may add that, during the time of that strict abstinence, I produced finer things and of more exquisite invention than at any other period of my life. After fifty days my health was re-established, and I continued with the utmost care to keep it and confirm it. When at last I ventured to relax my rigid diet, I found myself as wholly free from those infirmities as though I had been born again. Although I took pleasure in fortifying the health I so much longed for, yet I never left off working; both the chalice and the Mint had certainly as much of my attention as was due to them and to myself.

LX

It happened that Cardinal Salviati, who, as I have related, entertained an old hostility against me, had been appointed Legate to Parma. In that city a certain Milanese goldsmith, named Tobbia, was taken up for false coining, and condemned to the gallows and the stake. Representations in his favour, as being a man of great ability, were made to the Cardinal, who suspended the execution of the sentence, and wrote to the Pope, saying the best goldsmith in the world had come into his hands, sentenced to death for coining false money, but that he was a good simple fellow, who could plead in his excuse that he had taken counsel with his confessor, and had received, as he said, from him permission to do this. Thereto he added: "If you send for this great artist to Rome, your Holiness will bring down the overweening arrogance of your favourite Benvenuto, and I am quite certain that Tobbia's work will please you far more than his." The Pope accordingly sent for him at once; and when the man arrived, he made us both appear before him, and commissioned each of us to furnish a design for mounting an unicorn's horn, the finest which had ever been seen, and which had been sold for 17,000 ducats of the Camera. The Pope meant to give it to King Francis; but first he wished it richly set in gold, and ordered us to make sketches for this purpose. When they were finished, we took them to the Pope. That of Tobbia was in the form of a candlestick, the horn being stuck in it like a candle, and at the base of the

piece he had introduced four little unicorns' heads of a very poor design. When I saw the thing, I could not refrain from laughing gently in my sleeve. The Pope noticed this, and cried: "Here, show me your sketch!" It was a single unicorn's head, proportioned in size to the horn. I had designed the finest head imaginable; for I took it partly from the horse and partly from the stag, enriching it with fantastic mane and other ornaments. Accordingly, no sooner was it seen, than every one decided in my favour. There were, however, present at the competition certain Milanese gentlemen of the first consequence, who said: "Most blessed Father, your Holiness is sending this magnificent present into France; please to reflect that the French are people of no culture, and will not understand the excellence of Benvenuto's work; pyxes like this one of Tobbia's will suit their taste well, and these too can be finished quicker.[1] Benvenuto will devote himself to completing your chalice, and you will get two pieces done in the same time; moreover, this poor man, whom you have brought to Rome, will have the chance to be employed." The Pope, who was anxious to obtain his chalice, very willingly adopted the advice of the Milanese gentlefolk.

Next day, therefore, he commissioned Tobbia to mount the unicorn's horn, and sent his Master of the Wardrobe to bid me finish the chalice.[2] I replied that

[1] *The word I have translated pyxes is ciborii, vessels for holding the Eucharist.*

[2] *The Master of the Wardrobe was at that time Giovanni Aleotti. I need hardly remind my readers that Guardaroba or wardrobe was the apartment in a palace where arms, plate, furniture, and clothes were stored. We shall find, when we come to Cellini's service under Duke Cosimo, that princes spent much of their time in this place.*

I desired nothing in the world more than to complete the beautiful work I had begun: and if the material had been anything but gold, I could very easily have done so by myself; but it being gold, his Holiness must give me some of the metal if he wanted me to get through with my work. To this the vulgar courtier answered: "Zounds! don't ask the Pope for gold, unless you mean to drive him into such a fury as will ruin you." I said: "Oh, my good lord, will your lordship please to tell me how one can make bread without flour? Even so without gold this piece of mine cannot be finished." The Master of the Wardrobe, having an inkling that I had made a fool of him, told me he should report all I had spoken to his Holiness; and this he did. The Pope flew into a bestial passion, and swore he would wait to see if I was so mad as not to finish it. More than two months passed thus; and though I had declared I would not give a stroke to the chalice, I did not do so, but always went on working with the greatest interest. When he perceived I was not going to bring it, he began to display real displeasure, and protested he would punish me in one way or another.

A jeweller from Milan in the Papal service happened to be present when these words were spoken. He was called Pompeo, and was closely related to Messer Trajano, the most favoured servant of Pope Clement. The two men came, upon a common understanding, to him and said: "If your Holiness were to deprive Benvenuto of the Mint, perhaps he would take it into his head to complete the chalice." To this the Pope answered: "No; two evil things would

happen: first, I should be ill served in the Mint, which concerns me greatly; and secondly, I should certainly not get the chalice." The two Milanese, observing the Pope indisposed towards me, at last so far prevailed that he deprived me of the Mint, and gave it to a young Perugian, commonly known as Fagiuolo.[1] Pompeo came to inform me that his Holiness had taken my place in the Mint away, and that if I did not finish the chalice, he would deprive me of other things besides. I retorted: "Tell his Holiness that he has deprived himself and not me of the Mint, and that he will be doing the same with regard to those other things of which he speaks; and that if he wants to confer the post on me again, nothing will induce me to accept it." The graceless and unlucky fellow went off like an arrow to find the Pope and report this conversation; he added also something of his own invention. Eight days later, the Pope sent the same man to tell me that he did not mean me to finish the chalice, and wanted to have it back precisely at the point to which I had already brought it. I told Pompeo: "This thing is not like the Mint, which it was in his power to take away; but five hundred crowns which I received belong to his Holiness, and I am ready to return them; the piece itself is mine, and with it I shall do what I think best." Pompeo ran off to report my speech, together with some biting words which in my righteous anger I had let fly at himself.

[1] *Vasari mentions a Girolamo Fagiuoli, who flourished at this period, but calls him a Bolognese.*

LXI

After the lapse of three days, on a Thursday, there came to me two favourite Chamberlains of his Holiness; one of them is alive now, and a bishop; he was called Messer Pier Giovanni, and was an officer of the wardrobe; the other could claim nobler birth, but his name has escaped me. On arriving they spoke as follows: "The Pope hath sent us, Benvenuto; and since you have not chosen to comply with his request on easy terms, his commands now are that either you should give us up his piece, or that we should take you to prison." Thereupon I looked them very cheerfully in the face, replying: "My lords, if I were to give the work to his Holiness, I should be giving what is mine and not his, and at present I have no intention to make him this gift. I have brought it far forward with great labour, and do not want it to go into the hands of some ignorant beast who will destroy it with no trouble." While I spoke thus, the goldsmith Tobbia was standing by, who even presumptuously asked me for the models also of my work. What I retorted, in words worthy of such a rascal, need not here be repeated. Then, when those gentlemen, the Chamberlains, kept urging me to do quickly what I meant to do, I told them I was ready. So I took my cape up, and before I left the shop, I turned to an image of Christ, with solemn reverence and cap in hand, praying as thus: "O gracious and undying, just and holy our Lord, all the things thou doest are according to thy justice, which hath no peer on earth. Thou knowest

that I have exactly reached the age of thirty, and that up to this hour I was never threatened with a prison for any of my actions. Now that it is thy will that I should go to prison, with all my heart I thank thee for this dispensation." Thereat I turned round to the two Chamberlains, and addressed them with a certain lowering look I have: "A man of my quality deserved no meaner catchpoles than your lordships: place me between you, and take me as your prisoner where you like." Those two gentlemen, with the most perfect manners, burst out laughing, and put me between them; and so we went off, talking pleasantly, until they brought me to the Governor of Rome, who was called Il Magalotto.[1] When I reached him (and the Procurator-Fiscal was with him, both waiting for me), the Pope's Chamberlains, still laughing, said to the Governor: "We give up to you this prisoner; now see you take good care of him. We are very glad to have acted in the place of your agents; for Benvenuto has told us that this being his first arrest, he deserved no catchpoles of inferior station than we are." Immediately on leaving us, they sought the Pope; and when they had minutely related the whole matter, he made at first as though he would give way to passion, but afterwards he put control upon himself and laughed, because there were then in the presence certain lords and cardinals, my friends, who had warmly espoused my cause.

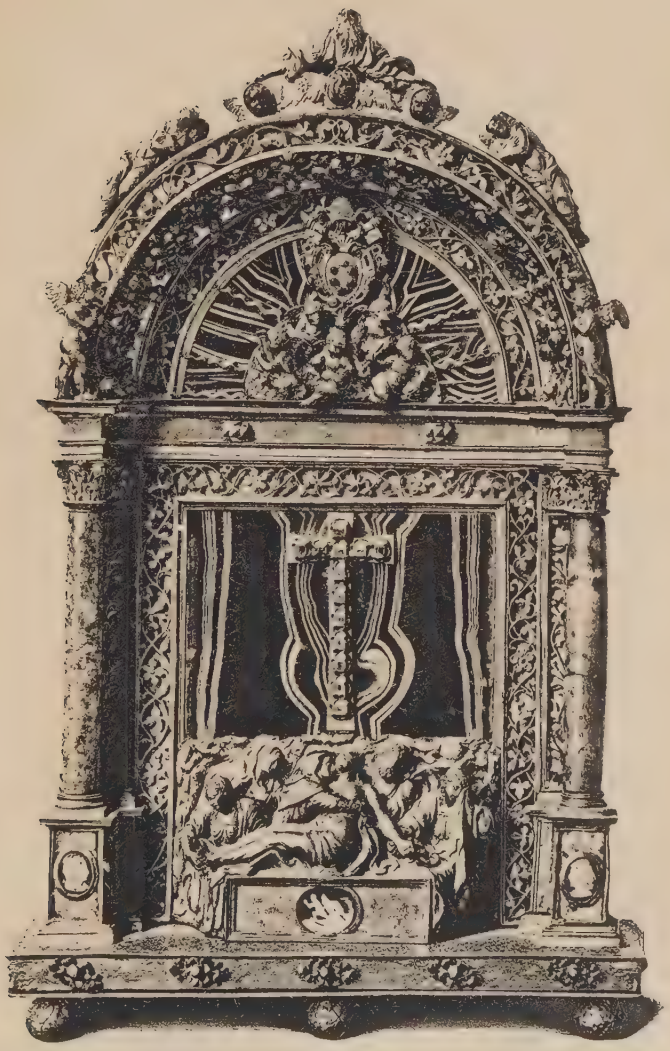
[1] *Gregorio Magalotti was a Roman. The Procurator-Fiscal was then Benedetto Valenti. Magalotti is said to have discharged his office with extreme severity, and to have run great risks of his life in consequence.*

Meanwhile, the Governor and the Fiscal were at me, partly bullying, partly expostulating, partly giving advice, and saying it was only reason that a man who ordered work from another should be able to withdraw it at his choice, and in any way which he thought best. To this I replied that such proceedings were not warranted by justice, neither could a Pope act thus; for that a Pope is not of the same kind as certain petty tyrant princes, who treat their folk as badly as they can, without regard to law or justice; and so a Vicar of Christ may not commit any of these acts of violence. Thereat the Governor, assuming his police-court style of threatening and bullying, began to say: "Benvenuto, Benvenuto, you are going about to make me treat you as you deserve." "You will treat me with honour and courtesy, if you wish to act as I deserve." Taking me up again, he cried: "Send for the work at once, and don't wait for a second order." I responded: "My lords, grant me the favour of being allowed to say four more words in my defence." The Fiscal, who was a far more reasonable agent of police than the Governor, turned to him and said: "Monsignor, suppose we let him say a hundred words, if he likes: so long as he gives up the work, that is enough for us." I spoke: "If any man you like to name had ordered a palace or a house to be built, he could with justice tell the master-mason: 'I do not want you to go on working at my house or palace;' and after paying him his labour, he would have the right to dismiss him. Likewise, if a nobleman gave commission for a jewel of a thousand crowns' value to be

set, when he saw that the jeweller was not serving him according to his desire, he could say: 'Give me back my stone, for I do not want your work.' But in a case of this kind none of those considerations apply; there is neither house nor jewel here; nobody can command me further than that I should return the five hundred crowns which I have had. Therefore, monsignori, do everything you can do; for you will get nothing from me beyond the five hundred crowns. Go and say this to the Pope. Your threats do not frighten me at all; for I am an honest man, and stand in no fear of my sins." The Governor and Fiscal rose, and said they were going to the Pope, and should return with orders which I should soon learn to my cost. So I remained there under guard. I walked up and down a large hall, and they were about three hours away before they came back from the Pope. In that while the flower of our nation among the merchants came to visit me, imploring me not to persist in contending with a Pope, for this might be the ruin of me. I answered them that I had made my mind up quite well what I wished to do.

LXII

No sooner had the Governor returned, together with the Procurator, from the palace, than he sent for me, and spoke to this effect: "Benvenuto, I am certainly sorry to come back from the Pope with such commands as I have received; you must either produce the chalice on the instant, or look to your affairs." Then I replied that "inasmuch as I had never to that hour believed a holy Vicar of Christ could commit



"PAIX" ATTRIBUTED TO CELLINI
(MILAN)

an unjust act, so I should like to see it before I did believe it; therefore do the utmost that you can." The Governor rejoined: "I have to report a couple of words more from the Pope to you, and then I will execute the orders given me. He says that you must bring your work to me here, and that after I have seen it put into a box and sealed, I must take it to him. He engages his word not to break the seal, and to return the piece to you untouched. But this much he wants to have done, in order to preserve his own honour in the affair." In return to this speech, I answered, laughing, that I would very willingly give up my work in the way he mentioned, because I should be glad to know for certain what a Pope's word was really worth.

Accordingly, I sent for my piece, and having had it sealed as described, gave it up to him. The Governor repaired again to the Pope, who took the box, according to what the Governor himself told me, and turned it several times about. Then he asked the Governor if he had seen the work; and he replied that he had, and that it had been sealed up in his presence, and added that it had struck him as a very admirable piece. Thereupon the Pope said: "You shall tell Benvenuto that Popes have authority to bind and loose things of far greater consequence than this;" and while thus speaking he opened the box with some show of anger, taking off the string and seals with which it was done up. Afterwards he paid it prolonged attention; and, as I subsequently heard, showed it to Tobbia the goldsmith, who bestowed much praise upon it. Then the Pope asked

him if he felt equal to producing a piece in that style. On his saying yes, the Pope told him to follow it out exactly; then turned to the Governor and said: "See whether Benvenuto will give it up; for if he does, he shall be paid the value fixed on it by men of knowledge in this art; but if he is really bent on finishing it himself, let him name a certain time; and if you are convinced that he means to do it, let him have all the reasonable accommodations he may ask for." The Governor replied: "Most blessed Father, I know the violent temper of this young man; so let me have authority to give him a sound rating after my own fashion." The Pope told him to do what he liked with words, though he was sure he would make matters worse; and if at last he could do nothing else, he must order me to take the five hundred crowns to his jeweller, Pompeo.

The Governor returned, sent for me into his cabinet, and casting one of his catchpole's glances, began to speak as follows: "Popes have authority to loose and bind the whole world, and what they do is immediately ratified in heaven. Behold your box, then, which has been opened and inspected by his Holiness." I lifted up my voice at once, and said: "I thank God that now I have learned and can report what the faith of Popes is made of." Then the Governor launched out into brutal bullying words and gestures; but perceiving that they came to nothing, he gave up his attempt as desperate, and spoke in somewhat milder tones after this wise: "Benvenuto, I am very sorry that you are so blind to your own interest; but since it is so, go and take the five hun-

dred crowns, when you think fit, to Pompeo." I took my piece up, went away, and carried the crowns to Pompeo on the instant. It is most likely that the Pope had counted on some want of money or other opportunity preventing me from bringing so considerable a sum at once, and was anxious in this way to repiece the broken thread of my obedience. When then he saw Pompeo coming to him with a smile upon his lips and the money in his hand, he soundly rated him, and lamented that the affair had turned out so. Then he said: "Go find Benvenuto in his shop, and treat him with all the courtesies of which your ignorant and brutal nature is capable, and tell him that if he is willing to finish that piece for a reliquary to hold the Corpus Domini when I walk in procession, I will allow him the conveniences he wants in order to complete it; provided only that he goes on working." Pompeo came to me, called me outside the shop, and heaped on me the most mawkish caresses of a donkey,[1] reporting everything the Pope had ordered. I lost no time in answering that "the greatest treasure I could wish for in the world was to regain the favour of so great a Pope, which had been lost to me, not indeed by my fault, but by the fault of my overwhelming illness and the wickedness of those envious men who take pleasure in making mischief; and since the Pope has plenty of servants, do not let him send you round again, if you value your life . . . nay, look well to your safety. I shall not fail, by night or day, to think and do everything I can in the Pope's service; and bear this

[1] *Le più isvenevole carezze d'asino.*

well in mind, that when you have reported these words to his Holiness, you never in any way whatever meddle with the least of my affairs, for I will make you recognise your errors by the punishment they merit." The fellow related everything to the Pope, but in far more brutal terms than I had used; and thus the matter rested for a time while I again attended to my shop and business.

LXIII

Tobbia the goldsmith meanwhile worked at the setting and the decoration of the unicorn's horn. The Pope, moreover, commissioned him to begin the chalice upon the model he had seen in mine. But when Tobbia came to show him what he had done, he was very discontented, and greatly regretted that he had broken with me, blaming all the other man's works and the people who had introduced them to him; and several times Baccino della Croce came from him to tell me that I must not neglect the reliquary. I answered that I begged his Holiness to let me breathe a little after the great illness I had suffered, and from which I was not as yet wholly free, adding that I would make it clear to him that all the hours in which I could work should be spent in his service. I had indeed begun to make his portrait, and was executing a medal in secret. I fashioned the steel dies for stamping this medal in my own house; while I kept a partner in my workshop, who had been my prentice and was called Felice.

At that time, as is the wont of young men, I had fallen in love with a Sicilian girl, who was exceed-

ingly beautiful. On it becoming clear that she returned my affection, her mother perceived how the matter stood, and grew suspicious of what might happen. The truth is that I had arranged to elope with the girl for a year to Florence, unknown to her mother; but she, getting wind of this, left Rome secretly one night, and went off in the direction of Naples. She gave out that she was gone by Cività Vecchia, but she really went by Ostia. I followed them to Cività Vecchia, and did a multitude of mad things to discover her. It would be too long to narrate them all in detail; enough that I was on the point of losing my wits or dying. After two months she wrote to me that she was in Sicily, extremely unhappy. I meanwhile was indulging myself in all the pleasures man can think of, and had engaged in another love affair, merely to drown the memory of my real passion.

LXIV

It happened through a variety of singular accidents that I became intimate with a Sicilian priest, who was a man of very elevated genius and well instructed in both Latin and Greek letters. In the course of conversation one day we were led to talk about the art of necromancy; apropos of which I said: "Throughout my whole life I have had the most intense desire to see or learn something of this art." Thereto the priest replied: "A stout soul and a steadfast must the man have who sets himself to such an enterprise." I answered that of strength and steadfastness of soul I should have enough and to spare, provided I

found the opportunity. Then the priest said: "If you have the heart to dare it, I will amply satisfy your curiosity." Accordingly we agreed upon attempting the adventure.

The priest one evening made his preparations, and bade me find a comrade, or not more than two. I invited Vincenzio Romoli, a very dear friend of mine, and the priest took with him a native of Pistoja, who also cultivated the black art. We went together to the Coliseum; and there the priest, having arrayed himself in necromancer's robes, began to describe circles on the earth with the finest ceremonies that can be imagined. I must say that he had made us bring precious perfumes and fire, and also drugs of fetid odour. When the preliminaries were completed, he made the entrance into the circle; and taking us by the hand, introduced us one by one inside it. Then he assigned our several functions; to the necromancer, his comrade, he gave the pentacle to hold; the other two of us had to look after the fire and the perfumes; and then he began his incantations. This lasted more than an hour and a half; when several legions appeared, and the Coliseum was all full of devils. I was occupied with the precious perfumes, and when the priest perceived in what numbers they were present, he turned to me and said: "Benvenuto, ask them something." I called on them to reunite me with my Sicilian Angelica. That night we obtained no answer; but I enjoyed the greatest satisfaction of my curiosity in such matters. The necromancer said that we should have to go a second time, and that I should obtain the full

accomplishment of my request; but he wished me to bring with me a little boy of pure virginity.

I chose one of my shop-lads, who was about twelve years old, and invited Vincenzio Romoli again; and we also took a certain Agnolino Gaddi, who was a very intimate friend of both. When we came once more to the place appointed, the necromancer made just the same preparations, attended by the same and even more impressive details. Then he introduced us into the circle, which he had reconstructed with art more admirable and yet more wondrous ceremonies. Afterwards he appointed my friend Vincenzio to the ordering of the perfumes and the fire, and with him Agnolino Gaddi. He next placed in my hand the pentacle, which he bid me turn toward the points he indicated, and under the pentacle I held the little boy, my workman. Now the necromancer began to utter those awful invocations, calling by name on multitudes of demons who are captains of their legions, and these he summoned by the virtue and potency of God, the Uncreated, Living, and Eternal, in phrases of the Hebrew, and also of the Greek and Latin tongues; insomuch that in a short space of time the whole Coliseum was full of a hundredfold as many as had appeared upon the first occasion. Vincenzio Romoli, together with Agnolino, tended the fire and heaped on quantities of precious perfumes. At the advice of the necromancer, I again demanded to be reunited with Angelica. The sorcerer turned to me and said: "Hear you what they have replied; that in the space of one month you will be where she is?" Then once more

he prayed me to stand firm by him, because the legions were a thousandfold more than he had summoned, and were the most dangerous of all the denizens of hell; and now that they had settled what I asked, it behoved us to be civil to them and dismiss them gently. On the other side, the boy, who was beneath the pentacle, shrieked out in terror that a million of the fiercest men were swarming round and threatening us. He said, moreover, that four huge giants had appeared, who were striving to force their way inside the circle. Meanwhile the necromancer, trembling with fear, kept doing his best with mild and soft persuasions to dismiss them. Vincenzio Romoli, who quaked like an aspen leaf, looked after the perfumes. Though I was quite as frightened as the rest of them, I tried to show it less, and inspired them all with marvellous courage; but the truth is that I had given myself up for dead when I saw the terror of the necromancer. The boy had stuck his head between his knees, exclaiming: "This is how I will meet death, for we are certainly dead men." Again I said to him: "These creatures are all inferior to us, and what you see is only smoke and shadow; so then raise your eyes." When he had raised them he cried out: "The whole Coliseum is in flames, and the fire is advancing on us;" then covering his face with his hands, he groaned again that he was dead, and that he could not endure the sight longer. The necromancer appealed for my support, entreating me to stand firm by him, and to have assafetida flung upon the coals; so I turned to Vincenzio Romoli, and told him to make the fumi-

gation at once. While uttering these words I looked at Agnolino Gaddi, whose eyes were starting from their sockets in his terror, and who was more than half dead, and said to him: "Agnolo, in time and place like this we must not yield to fright, but do the utmost to bestir ourselves; therefore, up at once, and fling a handful of that assafetida upon the fire." Agnolo, at the moment when he moved to do this, let fly such a volley from his breech, that it was far more effectual than the assafetida.[1] The boy, roused by that great stench and noise, lifted his face a little, and hearing me laugh, he plucked up courage, and said the devils were taking to flight tempestuously. So we abode thus until the matin-bells began to sound. Then the boy told us again that but few remained, and those were at a distance. When the necromancer had concluded his ceremonies, he put off his wizard's robe, and packed up a great bundle of books which he had brought with him; then, all together, we issued with him from the circle, huddling as close as we could to one another, especially the boy, who had got into the middle, and taken the necromancer by his gown and me by the cloak. All the while that we were going toward our houses in the Banchi, he kept saying that two of the devils he had seen in the Coliseum were gambolling in front of us, skipping now along the roofs and now upon the ground. The necromancer assured me that, often as he had entered magic circles, he had never met with such a serious affair as this. He also tried to persuade me to assist him in consecrating a book, by means of

[1] *Fece una istrombazzata di coregge con tanta abundanzia di merda.*

which we should extract immeasurable wealth, since we could call up fiends to show us where treasures were, whereof the earth is full; and after this wise we should become the richest of mankind: love affairs like mine were nothing but vanities and follies without consequence. I replied that if I were a Latin scholar I should be very willing to do what he suggested. He continued to persuade me by arguing that Latin scholarship was of no importance, and that, if he wanted, he could have found plenty of good Latinists; but that he had never met with a man of soul so firm as mine, and that I ought to follow his counsel. Engaged in this conversation, we reached our homes, and each one of us dreamed all that night of devils.

LXV

As we were in the habit of meeting daily, the necromancer kept urging me to join in his adventure. Accordingly, I asked him how long it would take, and where we should have to go. To this he answered that we might get through with it in less than a month, and that the most suitable locality for the purpose was the hill country of Norcia;[1] a master of his in the art had indeed consecrated such a book quite close to Rome, at a place called the Badia di Farfa; but he had met with some difficulties there, which would not occur in the mountains of Norcia; the peasants also of that district are people to be trusted, and have some practice in these matters, so that at

[1] *This district of the Central Apennines was always famous for witches, poisoners, and so forth. The Farfa mentioned below is a village of the Sabine hills.*

a pinch they are able to render valuable assistance.

This priestly sorcerer moved me so by his persuasions that I was well disposed to comply with his request; but I said I wanted first to finish the medals I was making for the Pope. I had confided what I was doing about them to him alone, begging him to keep my secret. At the same time I never stopped asking him if he believed that I should be reunited to my Sicilian Angelica at the time appointed; for the date was drawing near, and I thought it singular that I heard nothing about her. The necromancer told me that it was quite certain I should find myself where she was, since the devils never break their word when they promise, as they did on that occasion; but he bade me keep my eyes open, and be on the lookout against some accident which might happen to me in that connection, and put restraint upon myself to endure somewhat against my inclination, for he could discern a great and imminent danger in it: well would it be for me if I went with him to consecrate the book, since this would avert the peril that menaced me, and would make us both most fortunate.

I was beginning to hanker after the adventure more than he did; but I said that a certain Maestro Giovanni of Castel Bolognese had just come to Rome, very ingenious in the art of making medals of the sort I made in steel, and that I thirsted for nothing more than to compete with him and take the world by storm with some great masterpiece, which I hoped would annihilate all those enemies of mine by the force of genius and not the sword.[1] The sorcerer on

[1] *Gio. Bernardi had been in the Duke of Ferrara's service. Giovio brought him to*

his side went on urging: "Nay, prithee, Benvenuto, come with me and shun a great disaster which I see impending over you." However, I had made my mind up, come what would, to finish my medal, and we were now approaching the end of the month. I was so absorbed and enamoured by my work that I thought no more about Angelica or anything of that kind, but gave my whole self up to it.

LXVI

It happened one day, close on the hours of vespers, that I had to go at an unusual time for me from my house to my workshop; for I ought to say that the latter was in the Banchi, while I lived behind the Banchi, and went rarely to the shop; all my business there I left in the hands of my partner, Felice. Having stayed a short while in the workshop, I remembered that I had to say something to Alessandro del Bene. So I arose, and when I reached the Banchi, I met a man called Ser Benedetto, who was a great friend of mine. He was a notary, born in Florence, son of a blind man who said prayers about the streets for alms, and a Sienese by race. This Ser Benedetto had been very many years at Naples; afterwards he had settled in Rome, where he transacted business for some Sienese merchants of the Chigi.[1] My partner had over and over again asked him for some moneys which were due for certain little rings confided to Ser Benedetto. That very day, meeting him in the

*Rome, where he was patronised by the Cardinals Salviati and De' Medici. He made a famous medal of Clement VII., and was a Pontifical mace-bearer. He died at Faenza in 1555.*

[1] *The MS. has Figi; but this is probably a mistake of the amanuensis.*

Banchi, he demanded his money rather roughly, as his wont was. Benedetto was walking with his masters, and they, annoyed by the interruption, scolded him sharply, saying they would be served by somebody else, in order not to have to listen to such barking. Ser Benedetto did the best he could to excuse himself, swore that he had paid the goldsmith, and said he had no power to curb the rage of madmen. The Sienese took his words ill, and dismissed him on the spot. Leaving them, he ran like an arrow to my shop, probably to take revenge upon Felice. It chanced that just in the middle of the street we met. I, who had heard nothing of the matter, greeted him most kindly, according to my custom, to which courtesy he replied with insults. Then what the sorcerer had said flashed all at once upon my mind; and bridling myself as well as I was able, in the way he bade me, I answered: "Good brother Benedetto, don't fly into a rage with me, for I have done you no harm, nor do I know anything about these affairs of yours. Please go and finish what you have to do with Felice. He is quite capable of giving you a proper answer; but inasmuch as I know nothing about it, you are wrong to abuse me in this way, especially as you are well aware that I am not the man to put up with insults." He retorted that I knew everything, and that he was the man to make me bear a heavier load than that, and that Felice and I were two great rascals. By this time a crowd had gathered round to hear the quarrel. Provoked by his ugly words, I stooped and took up a lump of mud—for it had rained—and hurled it with a quick and un-

premeditated movement at his face. He ducked his head, so that the mud hit him in the middle of the skull. There was a stone in it with several sharp angles, one of which striking him, he fell stunned like a dead man: whereupon all the bystanders, seeing the great quantity of blood, judged that he was really dead.

LXVII

While he was still lying on the ground, and people were preparing to carry him away, Pompeo the jeweller passed by. The Pope had sent for him to give orders about some jewels. Seeing the fellow in such a miserable plight, he asked who had struck him; on which they told him: "Benvenuto did it, but the stupid creature brought it down upon himself." No sooner had Pompeo reached the Pope than he began to speak: "Most blessed Father, Benvenuto has this very moment murdered Tobbia; I saw it with my own eyes." On this the Pope in a fury ordered the Governor, who was in the presence, to take and hang me at once in the place where the homicide had been committed, adding that he must do all he could to catch me, and not appear again before him until he had hanged me.

When I saw the unfortunate Benedetto stretched upon the ground, I thought at once of the peril I was in, considering the power of my enemies, and what might ensue from this disaster. Making off, I took refuge in the house of Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, with the intention of preparing as soon as possible to escape from Rome. He, how-

IPPOLITO DE' MEDICI
(PONTORMO)

ever, advised me not to be in such a hurry, for it might turn out perhaps that the evil was not so great as I imagined; and calling Messer Annibal Caro, who lived with him, bade him go for information.

While these arrangements were being made, a Roman gentleman appeared, who belonged to the household of Cardinal de' Medici, and had been sent by him.[1] Taking Messer Giovanni and me apart, he told us that the Cardinal had reported to him what the Pope said, and that there was no way of helping me out of the scrape; it would be best for me to shun the first fury of the storm by flight, and not to risk myself in any house in Rome. Upon this gentleman's departure, Messer Giovanni looked me in the face as though he were about to cry, and said: "Ah me! Ah woe is me! There is nothing I can do to aid you!" I replied: "By God's means, I shall aid myself alone; only I request you to put one of your horses at my disposition." They had already saddled a black Turkish horse, the finest and the best in Rome. I mounted with an arquebuse upon the saddle-bow, wound up in readiness to fire, if need were.[2] When I reached Ponte Sisto, I found the whole of the Bargello's guard there, both horse and foot. So, making a virtue of necessity, I put my horse boldly to a sharp trot, and with God's grace, being somehow unperceived by them, passed freely through. Then, with all the speed

[1] *Ippolito de' Medici was a Cardinal, much against his natural inclination. When he went as Papal Legate to Hungary in* 1532, *he assumed the airs and style of a Condottiere. His jealousy of his cousin Alessandro led to his untimely death by poison in* 1535.

[2] *The gun was an arquebuso a ruota, which had a wheel to cock it.*

I could, I took the road to Palombara, a fief of my lord Giovanbatista Savello, whence I sent the horse back to Messer Giovanni, without, however, thinking it well to inform him where I was.[1] Lord Giovanbatista, after very kindly entertaining me two days, advised me to remove and go toward Naples till the storm blew over. So, providing me with company, he set me on the way to Naples.

While travelling, I met a sculptor of my acquaintance, who was going to San Germano to finish the tomb of Piero de' Medici at Monte Cassino.[2] His name was Solosmeo, and he gave me the news that on the very evening of the fray, Pope Clement sent one of his chamberlains to inquire how Tobbia was getting on. Finding him at work, unharmed, and without even knowing anything about the matter, the messenger went back and told the Pope, who turned round to Pompeo and said: "You are a good-for-nothing rascal; but I promise you well that you have stirred a snake up which will sting you, and serve you right!" Then he addressed himself to Cardinal de' Medici, and commissioned him to look after me, adding that he should be very sorry to let me slip through his fingers. And so Solosmeo and I went on our way singing toward Monte Cassino,

[1] *A village in the Sabina, north of Tivoli. Giov. Battista Savelli, of a great Roman house, was a captain of cavalry in the Papal service after* 1530. *In* 1540 *he entered the service of Duke Cosimo, and died in* 1553.

[2] *This sculptor was Antonio Solosmeo of Settignano. The monument erected to Piero de' Medici (drowned in the Garigliano,* 1504*) at Monte Cassino is by no means a brilliant piece of Florentine art. Piero was the exiled son of Lorenzo the Magnificent; and the Medici, when they regained their principality, erected this monument to his memory, employing Antonio da San Gallo, Francesco da San Gallo, and a Neapolitan, Matteo de' Quaranta. The work was begun in* 1532. *Solosmeo appears from this passage in Cellini to have taken the execution of it over.*

intending to pursue our journey thence in company toward Naples.

LXVIII

When Solosmeo had inspected his affairs at Monte Cassino, we resumed our journey; and having come within a mile of Naples, we were met by an innkeeper, who invited us to his house, and said he had been at Florence many years with Carlo Ginori;[1] adding, that if we put up at his inn, he would treat us most kindly, for the reason that we both were Florentines. We told him frequently that we did not want to go to him. However, he kept passing, sometimes in front and sometimes behind, perpetually repeating that he would have us stop at his hostelry. When this began to bore me, I asked if he could tell me anything about a certain Sicilian woman called Beatrice, who had a beautiful daughter named Angelica, and both were courtesans. Taking it into his head that I was jeering him, he cried out: "God send mischief to all courtesans and such as favour them!" Then he set spurs to his horse, and made off as though he was resolved to leave us. I felt some pleasure at having rid myself in so fair a manner of that ass of an innkeeper; and yet I was rather the loser than the gainer; for the great love I bore Angelica had come back to my mind, and while I was conversing, not without some lover's sighs, upon this subject with Solosmeo, we saw the man returning to us at a gallop. When he drew up, he said: "Two or perhaps three days ago a woman and a girl came

[1] *A Gonfalonier of the Republic in 1527.*

back to a house in my neighbourhood; they had the names you mentioned, but whether they are Sicilians I cannot say." I answered: "Such power over me has that name of Angelica, that I am now determined to put up at your inn."

We rode on all together with mine host into the town of Naples, and descended at his house. Minutes seemed years to me till I had put my things in order, which I did in the twinkling of an eye; then I went to the house, which was not far from our inn, and found there my Angelica, who greeted me with infinite demonstrations of the most unbounded passion. I stayed with her from evenfall until the following morning, and enjoyed such pleasure as I never had before or since; but while drinking deep of this delight, it occurred to my mind how exactly on that day the month expired, which had been prophesied within the necromantic circle by the devils. So then let every man who enters into relation with those spirits weigh well the inestimable perils I have passed through!

LXIX

I happened to have in my purse a diamond, which I showed about among the goldsmiths; and though I was but young, my reputation as an able artist was so well known even at Naples that they welcomed me most warmly. Among others, I made acquaintance with a most excellent companion, a jeweller, Messer Domenico Fontana by name. This worthy man left his shop for the three days that I spent in Naples, nor ever quitted my company, but showed me many admirable monuments of antiquity in the city

and its neighbourhood. Moreover, he took me to pay my respects to the Viceroy of Naples, who had let him know that he should like to see me. When I presented myself to his Excellency, he received me with much honour;[1] and while we were exchanging compliments, the diamond which I have mentioned caught his eye. He made me show it him, and prayed me, if I parted with it, to give him the refusal. Having taken back the stone, I offered it again to his Excellency, adding that the diamond and I were at his service. Then he said that the diamond pleased him well, but that he should be much better pleased if I were to stay with him; he would make such terms with me as would cause me to feel satisfied. We spoke many words of courtesy on both sides; and then coming to the merits of the diamond, his Excellency bade me without hesitation name the price at which I valued it. Accordingly I said that it was worth exactly two hundred crowns. He rejoined that in his opinion I had not overvalued it; but that since I had set it, and he knew me for the first artist in the world, it would not make the same effect when mounted by another hand. To this I said that I had not set the stone, and that it was not well set; its brilliancy was due to its own excellence; and that if I were to mount it afresh, I could make it show far better than it did. Then I put my thumb-nail to the angles of its facets, took it from the ring, cleaned it up a little, and handed it to the Viceroy. Delighted and astonished, he wrote

[1] *The Spanish Viceroy was at this time Pietro Alvarez de Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca, and uncle of the famous Duke of Alva. He governed Naples for twenty years, from 1532 onwards.*

me out a cheque[1] for the two hundred crowns I had demanded.

When I returned to my lodging, I found letters from the Cardinal de' Medici, in which he told me to come back post-haste to Rome, and to dismount without delay at the palace of his most reverend lordship. I read the letter to my Angelica, who begged me with tears of affection either to remain in Naples or to take her with me. I replied that if she was disposed to come with me, I would give up to her keeping the two hundred ducats I had received from the Viceroy. Her mother perceiving us in this close conversation, drew nigh and said: "Benvenuto, if you want to take my daughter to Rome, leave me a sum of fifteen ducats, to pay for my lying-in, and then I will travel after you." I told the old harridan that I would very gladly leave her thirty if she would give me my Angelica. We made the bargain, and Angelica entreated me to buy her a gown of black velvet, because the stuff was cheap at Naples. I consented to everything, sent for the velvet, settled its price and paid for it; then the old woman, who thought me over head and ears in love, begged for a gown of fine cloth for herself, as well as other outlays for her sons, and a good bit more money than I had offered. I turned to her with a pleasant air and said: "My dear Beatrice, are you satisfied with what I offered?" She answered that she was not; thereupon I said that what was not enough for her would be quite enough for me; and having kissed Angelica, we parted, she

[1] *Mi fece una polizza. A polizza was an order for money, practically identical with our cheque.*

with tears, and I with laughter, and off at once I set for Rome.

LXX

I left Naples by night with my money in my pocket, and this I did to prevent being set upon or murdered, as is the way there; but when I came to Selciata,[1] I had to defend myself with great address and bodily prowess from several horsemen who came out to assassinate me. During the following days, after leaving Solosmeo at his work in Monte Cassino, I came one morning to breakfast at the inn of Adanagni;[2] and when I was near the house, I shot some birds with my arquebuse. An iron spike, which was in the lock of my musket, tore my right hand. Though the wound was not of any consequence, it seemed to be so, because it bled abundantly. Going into the inn, I put my horse up, and ascended to a large gallery, where I found a party of Neapolitan gentlemen just upon the point of sitting down to table; they had with them a young woman of quality, the loveliest I ever saw. At the moment when I entered the room, I was followed by a very brave young serving-man of mine holding a big partisan in his hand. The sight of us, our arms, and the blood, inspired those poor gentlemen with such terror, particularly as the place was known to be a nest of murderers, that they rose from table and called on God in a panic to protect them. I began to laugh,

[1] *Ponte a Selice, between Capua and Aversa.*

[2] *Anagni, where Boniface VIII. was outraged to the death by the French partisans of Philip le Bel.*

and said that God had protected them already, for that I was a man to defend them against whoever tried to do them harm. Then I asked them for something to bind up my wounded hand; and the charming lady took out a handkerchief richly embroidered with gold, wishing to make a bandage with it. I refused; but she tore the piece in half, and in the gentlest manner wrapt my hand up with her fingers. The company thus having regained confidence, we dined together very gaily; and when the meal was over, we all mounted and went off together. The gentlemen, however, were not as yet quite at their ease; so they left me in their cunning to entertain the lady, while they kept at a short distance behind. I rode at her side upon a pretty little horse of mine, making signs to my servant that he should keep somewhat apart, which gave us the opportunity of discussing things that are not sold by the apothecary.[1] In this way I journeyed to Rome with the greatest enjoyment I have ever had.

When I got to Rome, I dismounted at the palace of Cardinal de' Medici, and having obtained an audience of his most reverend lordship, paid my respects, and thanked him warmly for my recall. I then entreated him to secure me from imprisonment, and even from a fine if that were possible. The Cardinal was very glad to see me; told me to stand in no fear; then turned to one of his gentlemen, called Messer Pier Antonio Pecci of Siena, ordering him to tell the Bargello not to touch me.[2] He then asked

[1] *i.e., private and sentimental.*

[2] *This Pecci passed into the service of Caterina de' Medici. In 1551 he schemed to*

him how the man was going on whose head I had broken with the stone. Messer Pier Antonio replied that he was very ill, and that he would probably be even worse; for when he heard that I was coming back to Rome, he swore he would die to serve me an ill turn. When the Cardinal heard that, he burst into a fit of laughter, and cried: "The fellow could not have taken a better way than this to make us know that he was born a Sienese." After that he turned to me and said: "For our reputation and your own, refrain these four or five days from going about in the Banchi; after that go where you like, and let fools die at their own pleasure."

I went home and set myself to finishing the medal which I had begun, with the head of Pope Clement and a figure of Peace on the reverse. The figure was a slender woman, dressed in very thin drapery, gathered at the waist, with a little torch in her hand, which was burning a heap of arms bound together like a trophy. In the background I had shown part of a temple, where was Discord chained with a load of fetters. Round about it ran a legend in these words: *Clauduntur belli portæ.*[1]

During the time that I was finishing this medal, the man whom I had wounded recovered, and the Pope kept incessantly asking for me. I, however, avoided visiting Cardinal de' Medici; for whenever I showed my face before him, his lordship gave me some commission of importance, which hindered me

*withdraw Siena from the Spanish to the French cause, and was declared a rebel.*

[1] *The medal was struck to celebrate the peace in Christendom between 1530 and 1536.*

from working at my medal to the end. Consequently Messer Pier Carnesecchi, who was a great favourite of the Pope's, undertook to keep me in sight, and let me adroitly understand how much the Pope desired my services.[1] I told him that in a few days I would prove to his Holiness that his service had never been neglected by me.

LXXI

Not many days had passed before, my medal being finished, I stamped it in gold, silver, and copper. After I had shown it to Messer Pietro, he immediately introduced me to the Pope. It was on a day in April after dinner, and the weather very fine; the Pope was in the Belvedere. After entering the presence, I put my medals together with the dies of steel into his hand. He took them, and recognising at once their mastery of art, looked Messer Piero in the face and said: "The ancients never had such medals made for them as these."

While he and the others were inspecting them, taking up now the dies and now the medals in their hands, I began to speak as submissively as I was able: "If a greater power had not controlled the working of my inauspicious stars, and hindered that with which they violently menaced me, your Holiness, without your fault or mine, would have lost a faithful and loving servant. It must, most blessed Father, be allowed that in those cases where men are risking all upon one throw, it is not wrong to

[1] *Piero Carnesecchi was one of the martyrs of free-thought in Italy. He adopted Protestant opinions, and was beheaded and burned in Rome, August* 1567.

do as certain poor and simple men are wont to say, who tell us we must mark seven times and cut once.[1] Your Holiness will remember how the malicious and lying tongue of my bitter enemy so easily aroused your anger, that you ordered the Governor to have me taken on the spot and hanged; but I have no doubt that when you had become aware of the irreparable act by which you would have wronged yourself, in cutting off from you a servant such as even now your Holiness hath said he is, I am sure, I repeat, that, before God and the world, you would have felt no trifling twinges of remorse. Excellent and virtuous fathers, and masters of like quality, ought not to let their arm in wrath descend upon their sons and servants with such inconsiderate haste, seeing that subsequent repentance will avail them nothing. But now that God has overruled the malign influences of the stars and saved me for your Holiness, I humbly beg you another time not to let yourself so easily be stirred to rage against me."

The Pope had stopped from looking at the medals and was now listening attentively to what I said. There were many noblemen of the greatest consequence present, which made him blush a little, as it were for shame; and not knowing how else to extricate himself from this entanglement, he said that he could not remember having given such an order. I changed the conversation in order to cover his embarrassment. His Holiness then began to speak again

[1] *Segnar sette e tagliar uno. A proverb derived possibly from felling trees; or, as some commentators interpret, from the points made by sculptors on their marble before they block the statue out.*

about the medals, and asked what method I had used to stamp them so marvellously, large as they were; for he had never met with ancient pieces of that size. We talked a little on this subject; but being not quite easy that I might not begin another lecture sharper than the last, he praised my medals, and said they gave him the greatest satisfaction, but that he should like another reverse made according to a fancy of his own, if it were possible to stamp them with two different patterns. I said that it was possible to do so. Then his Holiness commissioned me to design the history of Moses when he strikes the rock and water issues from it, with this motto: *Ut bibat populus.*[1] At last he added: "Go, Benvenuto; you will not have finished it before I have provided for your fortune." After I had taken leave, the Pope proclaimed before the whole company that he would give me enough to live on wealthily without the need of labouring for any one but him. So I devoted myself entirely to working out this reverse with the Moses on it.

LXXII

In the meantime the Pope was taken ill, and his physicians thought the case was dangerous. Accordingly my enemy began to be afraid of me, and engaged some Neapolitan soldiers to do to me what he was dreading I might do to him.[2] I had therefore much trouble to defend my poor life. In course of

[1] *The medal commemorated a deep well sunk by Clement at Orvieto.*

[2] *The meaning of this is, that if Clement died, Cellini would have had his opportunity of vengeance during the anarchy which followed a vacancy of the Papal See.*

time, however, I completed the reverse; and when I took it to the Pope, I found him in bed in a most deplorable condition. Nevertheless, he received me with the greatest kindness, and wished to inspect the medals and the dies. He sent for spectacles and lights, but was unable to see anything clearly. Then he began to fumble with his fingers at them, and having felt them a short while, he fetched a deep sigh, and said to his attendants that he was much concerned about me, but that if God gave him back his health he would make it all right.

Three days afterwards the Pope died, and I was left with all my labour lost; yet I plucked up courage, and told myself that these medals had won me so much celebrity, that any Pope who was elected would give me work to do, and peradventure bring me better fortune. Thus I encouraged and put heart into myself, and buried in oblivion all the injuries which Pompeo had done me. Then putting on my arms and girding my sword, I went to San Piero, and kissed the feet of the dead Pope, not without shedding tears. Afterwards I returned to the Banchi to look on at the great commotion which always happens on such occasions.

While I was sitting in the street with several of my friends, Pompeo went by, attended by ten men very well armed; and when he came just opposite, he stopped, as though about to pick a quarrel with myself. My companions, brave and adventurous young men, made signs to me to draw my sword; but it flashed through my mind that if I drew, some terrible mischief might result for persons who were wholly

innocent. Therefore I considered that it would be better if I put my life to risk alone. When Pompeo had stood there time enough to say two Ave Maries, he laughed derisively in my direction; and going off, his fellows also laughed and wagged their heads, with many other insolent gestures. My companions wanted to begin the fray at once; but I told them hotly that I was quite able to conduct my quarrels to an end by myself, and that I had no need of stouter fighters than I was; so that each of them might mind his business. My friends were angry and went off muttering. Now there was among them my dearest comrade, named Albertaccio del Bene, own brother to Alessandro and Albizzo, who is now a very rich man in Lyons. He was the most redoubtable young man I ever knew, and the most high-spirited, and loved me like himself; and insomuch as he was well aware that my forbearance had not been inspired by want of courage, but by the most daring bravery, for he knew me down to the bottom of my nature, he took my words up and begged me to favour him so far as to associate him with myself in all I meant to do. I replied: "Dear Albertaccio, dearest to me above all men that live, the time will very likely come when you shall give me aid; but in this case, if you love me, do not attend to me, but look to your own business, and go at once like our other friends, for now there is no time to lose." These words were spoken in one breath.

LXXIII

In the meanwhile my enemies had proceeded slowly toward Chiavica, as the place was called, and had arrived at the crossing of several roads, going in different directions; but the street in which Pompeo's house stood was the one which leads straight to the Campo di Fiore. Some business or other made him enter the apothecary's shop which stood at the corner of Chiavica, and there he stayed a while transacting it. I had just been told that he had boasted of the insult which he fancied he had put upon me; but be that as it may, it was to his misfortune; for precisely when I came up to the corner, he was leaving the shop, and his bravi had opened their ranks and received him in their midst. I drew a little dagger with a sharpened edge, and breaking the line of his defenders, laid my hands upon his breast so quickly and coolly, that none of them were able to prevent me. Then I aimed to strike him in the face; but fright made him turn his head round; and I stabbed him just beneath the ear. I only gave two blows, for he fell stone dead at the second. I had not meant to kill him; but as the saying goes, knocks are not dealt by measure. With my left hand I plucked back the dagger, and with my right hand drew my sword to defend my life. However, all those bravi ran up to the corpse and took no action against me; so I went back alone through Strada Giulia, considering how best to put myself in safety.

I had walked about three hundred paces, when Piloto the goldsmith, my very good friend, came up

and said: "Brother, now that the mischief's done, we must see to saving you." I replied: "Let us go to Albertaccio del Bene's house; it is only a few minutes since I told him I should soon have need of him." When we arrived there, Albertaccio and I embraced with measureless affection; and soon the whole flower of the young men of the Banchi, of all nations except the Milanese, came crowding in; and each and all made proffer of their own life to save mine. Messer Luigi Rucellai also sent with marvellous promptitude and courtesy to put his services at my disposal, as did many other great folk of his station; for they all agreed in blessing my hands,[1] judging that Pompeo had done me too great and unforgivable an injury, and marvelling that I had put up with him so long.

LXXIV

Cardinal Cornaro, on hearing of the affair, despatched thirty soldiers, with as many partisans, pikes, and arquebuses, to bring me with all due respect to his quarters.[2] This he did unasked; whereupon I accepted the invitation, and went off with them, while more than as many of the young men bore me company. Meanwhile, Messer Traiano, Pompeo's relative and first chamberlain to the Pope, sent a Milanese of high rank to Cardinal de' Medici, giving him news of the great crime I had committed, and calling on his most reverend lordship to chastise me.

[1] *Tutti d'accordo mi benedissono le mani. This is tantamount to approving Cellini's handiwork in murdering Pompeo.*

[2] *This was Francesco, brother to Cardinal Marco Cornaro. He received the hat in* 1528, *while yet a layman, and the Bishopric of Brescia in* 1531.

The Cardinal retorted on the spot: "His crime would indeed have been great if he had not committed this lesser one; thank Messer Traiano from me for giving me this information of a fact of which I had not heard before." Then he turned and in presence of the nobleman said to the Bishop of Frullì,[1] his gentleman and intimate acquaintance: "Search diligently after my friend Benvenuto; I want to help and defend him; and whoso acts against him acts against myself." The Milanese nobleman went back, much disconcerted, while the Bishop of Frullì came to visit me at Cardinal Cornaro's palace. Presenting himself to the Cardinal, he related how Cardinal de' Medici had sent for Benvenuto, and wanted to be his protector. Now Cardinal Cornaro, who had the touchy temper of a bear, flew into a rage, and told the Bishop he was quite as well able to defend me as Cardinal de' Medici. The Bishop, in reply, entreated to be allowed to speak with me on some matters of his patron which had nothing to do with the affair. Cornaro bade him for that day make as though he had already talked with me.

Cardinal de' Medici was very angry. However, I went the following night, without Cornaro's knowledge, and under good escort, to pay him my respects. Then I begged him to grant me the favour of leaving me where I was, and told him of the great courtesy which Cornaro had shown me; adding that if his most reverend lordship suffered me to stay, I should gain one friend the more in my hour of need; otherwise his lordship might dispose of me exactly

[1] *Forlì. The Bishop was Bernardo de' Medici.*

as he thought best. He told me to do as I liked; so I returned to Cornaro's palace, and a few days afterwards the Cardinal Farnese was elected Pope.[1]

After he had put affairs of greater consequence in order, the new Pope sent for me, saying that he did not wish any one else to strike his coins. To these words of his Holiness a gentleman very privately acquainted with him, named Messer Latino Juvinale, made answer that I was in hiding for a murder committed on the person of one Pompeo of Milan, and set forth what could be argued for my justification in the most favourable terms.[2] The Pope replied: "I knew nothing of Pompeo's death, but plenty of Benvenuto's provocation; so let a safe-conduct be at once made out for him, in order that he may be placed in perfect security." A great friend of Pompeo's, who was also intimate with the Pope, happened to be there; he was a Milanese, called Messer Ambrogio.[3] This man said: "In the first days of your papacy it were not well to grant pardons of this kind." The Pope turned to him and answered: "You know less about such matters than I do. Know then that men like Benvenuto, unique in their profession, stand above the law; and how far more he, then, who received the provocation I have heard of?" When my safe-conduct had been drawn out, I began at once to serve him, and was treated with the utmost favour.

[1] *Paul III., elected October 13, 1534.*

[2] *Latino Giovenale de' Manetti was a Latin poet and a man of humane learning, much esteemed by his contemporaries.*

[3] *Ambrogio Recalcati. He was for many years the trusted secretary and diplomatic agent of Paul III.*

LXXV

Messer Latino Juvinale came to call on me, and gave me orders to strike the coins of the Pope. This roused up all my enemies, who began to look about how they should hinder me; but the Pope, perceiving their drift, scolded them, and insisted that I should go on working. I took the dies in hand, designing a S. Paul, surrounded with this inscription: *Vas electionis*. This piece of money gave far more satisfaction than the models of my competitors; so that the Pope forbade any one else to speak to him of coins, since he wished me only to have to do with them. This encouraged me to apply myself with untroubled spirit to the task; and Messer Latino Juvinale, who had received such orders from the Pope, used to introduce me to his Holiness. I had it much at heart to recover the post of stamper to the Mint; but on this point the Pope took advice, and then told me I must first obtain pardon for the homicide, and this I should get at the holy Maries' day in August through the Caporioni of Rome.[1] I may say that it is usual every year on this solemn festival to grant the freedom of twelve outlaws to these officers. Meanwhile he promised to give me another safe-conduct, which should keep me in security until that time.

When my enemies perceived that they were quite unable to devise the means of keeping me out of the Mint, they resorted to another expedient. The de-

[1] *Le Sante Marie. So the Feast of the Assumption is called at Florence, because devotion is paid on that day to the various images of the Virgin scattered through the town. The Caporioni of Rome were, like aldermen, wardens of the districts into which the city was divided.*

ceased Pompeo had left three thousand ducats as dowry to an illegitimate daughter of his; and they contrived that a certain favourite of Signor Pier Luigi, the Pope's son, should ask her hand in marriage through the medium of his master.[1] Accordingly the match came off; but this fellow was an insignificant country lad, who had been brought up by his lordship; and, as folk said, he got but little of the money, since his lordship laid his hands on it and had the mind to use it. Now the husband of the girl, to please his wife, begged the prince to have me taken up; and he promised to do so when the first flush of my favour with the Pope had passed away. Things stood so about two months, the servant always suing for his wife's dower, the master putting him off with pretexts, but assuring the woman that he would certainly revenge her father's murder. I obtained an inkling of these designs; yet I did not omit to present myself pretty frequently to his lordship, who made show of treating me with great distinction. He had, however, decided to do one or other of two things—either to have me assassinated, or to have me taken up by the Bargello. Accordingly he commissioned a certain little devil of a Corsican soldier in his service to do the trick as cleverly as he could;[2] and my other enemies, with Messer Traiano at the head of them, promised the fellow a reward of one hundred crowns. He assured them that the

[1] *Pier Luigi Farnese, Paul III.'s bastard, was successively created Gonfaloniere of the Church, Duke of Castro, Marquis of Novara, and finally Duke of Parma and Piacenza in* 1545. *He was murdered at Parma by his own courtiers in* 1547. *He was a man of infamous habits, quite unfit for the high dignities conferred on him.*

[2] *Che la facessi più netta che poteva.*

job would be as easy as sucking a fresh egg. Seeing into their plot, I went about with my eyes open and with good attendance, wearing an under-coat and armlets of mail, for which I had obtained permission.

The Corsican, influenced by avarice, hoped to gain the whole sum of money without risk, and imagined himself capable of carrying the matter through alone. Consequently, one day after dinner, he had me sent for in the name of Signor Pier Luigi. I went off at once, because his lordship had spoken of wanting to order several big silver vases. Leaving my home in a hurry, armed however as usual, I walked rapidly through Strada Giulia toward the Palazzo Farnese, not expecting to meet anybody at that hour of day. I had reached the end of the street and was making toward the palace, when, my habit being always to turn the corners wide, I observed the Corsican get up and take his station in the middle of the road. Being prepared, I was not in the least disconcerted; but kept upon my guard, and slackening pace a little, drew nearer toward the wall, in order to give the fellow a wide berth. He on his side came closer to the wall, and when we were now within a short distance of each other, I perceived by his gestures that he had it in his mind to do me a mischief, and seeing me alone thus, thought he should succeed. Accordingly, I began to speak and said: "Brave soldier, if it had been night, you might have said you had mistaken me, but since it is full day, you know well enough who I am. I never had anything to do with you, and never injured you, but should be well disposed to do you service." He replied in

a high-spirited way, without, however, making room for me to pass, that he did not know what I was saying. Then I answered: "I know very well indeed what you want, and what you are saying; but the job which you have taken in hand is more dangerous and difficult than you imagine, and may peradventure turn out the wrong way for you. Remember that you have to do with a man who would defend himself against a hundred; and the adventure you are on is not esteemed by men of courage like yourself." Meanwhile I also was looking black as thunder, and each of us had changed colour. Folk too gathered round us, for it had become clear that our words meant swords and daggers. He then, not having the spirit to lay hands on me, cried out: "We shall meet another time." I answered: "I am always glad to meet honest men and those who show themselves as such."

When we parted, I went to his lordship's palace, and found he had not sent for me. When I returned to my shop, the Corsican informed me, through an intimate friend of his and mine, that I need not be on my guard against him, since he wished to be my good brother; but that I ought to be much upon my guard against others, seeing I was in the greatest peril, for folk of much consequence had sworn to have my life. I sent to thank him, and kept the best lookout I could. Not many days after, a friend of mine informed me that Signor Pier Luigi had given strict orders that I should be taken that very evening. They told me this at twenty; whereupon I spoke with some of my friends, who advised me to be off

at once. The order had been given for one hour after sunset; accordingly at twenty-three I left in the post for Florence. It seems that when the Corsican showed that he had not pluck enough to do the business as he promised, Signor Pier Luigi on his own authority gave orders to have me taken, merely to stop the mouth of Pompeo's daughter, who was always clamouring to know where her dower had gone to. When he was unable to gratify her in this matter of revenge on either of the two plans he had formed, he bethought him of another, which shall be related in its proper place.

LXXVI

I reached Florence in due course, and paid my respects to the Duke Alessandro, who greeted me with extraordinary kindness and pressed me to remain in his service. There was then at Florence a sculptor called Il Tribolino, and we were gossips, for I had stood godfather to his son.[1] In course of conversation he told me that a certain Giacopo del Sansovino, his first master, had sent for him; and whereas he had never seen Venice, and because of the gains he expected, he was very glad to go there.[2] On his asking

[1] *Niccolo de' Pericoli, a Florentine, who got the nickname of Tribolo in his boyhood, was a sculptor of some distinction. He worked on the bas-reliefs of San Petronio at Bologna, and helped Michel Agnolo da Siena to execute the tomb of Adrian VI. at Rome. Afterwards he was employed upon the sculpture of the Santa Casa at Loreto. He also made some excellent bronze-work for the Medicean villas at Cestello and Petraja. All through his life Tribolo served the Medici, and during the siege of Florence in* 1530 *he constructed a cork model of the town for Clement VII. Born* 1485, *died* 1550.

[2] *This is the famous Giacopo Tatti, who took his artist's surname from his master, Andrea da Monte a Sansovino. His works at Florence, Rome, and Venice are justly famous. He died in* 1570, *aged ninety-three.*

me if I had ever been at Venice, I said no; this made him invite me to accompany him, and I agreed. So then I told Duke Alessandro that I wanted first to go to Venice, and that afterwards I would return to serve him. He exacted a formal promise to this effect, and bade me present myself before I left the city. Next day, having made my preparations, I went to take leave of the Duke, whom I found in the palace of the Pazzi, at that time inhabited by the wife and daughters of Signor Lorenzo Cibo.[1] Having sent word to his Excellency that I wished to set off for Venice with his good leave, Signor Cosimino de' Medici, now Duke of Florence, returned with the answer that I must go to Niccolò da Monte Aguto, who would give me fifty golden crowns, which his Excellency bestowed on me in sign of his good-will, and afterwards I must return to serve him.

I got the money from Niccolò, and then went to fetch Tribolo, whom I found ready to start; and he asked me whether I had bound my sword. I answered that a man on horseback about to take a journey ought not to bind his sword. He said that the custom was so in Florence, since a certain Ser Maurizio then held office, who was capable of putting S. John the Baptist to the rack for any trifling peccadillo.[2] Accordingly one had to carry one's sword bound till the gates were passed. I laughed at this, and so we set off, joining the courier to Venice, who was nicknamed Il Lamentone. In his company we

[1] *A brother of the Cardinal, and himself Marquis of Massa.*

[2] *Ser Maurizio was entitled Chancellor, but really superintended the criminal magistracy of Florence. Varchi and Segni both speak of him as harsh and cruel in the discharge of his office.*

GIACOPO TATTI. CALLED SANSOVINO
(TINTORETTO)

travelled through Bologna, and arrived one evening at Ferrara. There we halted at the inn of the Piazza, while Lamentone went in search of some Florentine exiles, to take them letters and messages from their wives. The Duke had given orders that only the courier might talk to them, and no one else, under penalty of incurring the same banishment as they had. Meanwhile, since it was a little past the hour of twenty-two, Tribolo and I went to see the Duke of Ferrara come back from Belfiore, where he had been at a jousting match. There we met a number of exiles, who stared at us as though they wished to make us speak with them. Tribolo, who was the most timorous man that I have ever known, kept on saying: "Do not look at them or talk to them, if you care to go back to Florence." So we stayed, and saw the Duke return; afterwards, when we regained our inn, we found Lamentone there. After nightfall there appeared Niccolò Benintendi, and his brother Piero, and another old man, whom I believe to have been Jacopo Nardi,[1] together with some young fellows, who began immediately to ask the courier news, each man of his own family in Florence.[2] Tribolo and I kept at a distance, in order to avoid speaking with them. After they had talked a while with Lamentone, Niccolò Benintendi[3] said: "I know those two men there very well; what's the

[1] *Jacopo Nardi was the excellent historian of Florence, a strong anti-Medicean partisan, who was exiled in* 1530.

[2] *I have translated the word brigata by family above, because I find Cellini in one of his letters alluding to his family as la mia brigatina.*

[3] *Niccolò Benintendi, who had been a member of the Eight in* 1529, *was exiled by the Medici in* 1530.

reason they give themselves such beastly airs, and will not talk to us?" Tribolo kept begging me to hold my tongue, while Lamentone told them that we had not the same permission as he had. Benintendi retorted it was idiotic nonsense, adding "Pox take them," and other pretty flowers of speech. Then I raised my head as gently as I could, and said: "Dear gentlemen, you are able to do us serious injury, while we cannot render you any assistance; and though you have flung words at us which we are far from deserving, we do not mean on that account to get into a rage with you." Thereupon old Nardi said that I had spoken like a worthy young man as I was. But Niccolò Benintendi shouted: "I snap my fingers at them and the Duke."[1] I replied that he was in the wrong toward us, since we had nothing to do with him or his affairs. Old Nardi took our part, telling Benintendi plainly that he was in the wrong, which made him go on muttering insults. On this I bade him know that I could say and do things to him which he would not like, and therefore he had better mind his business, and let us alone. Once more he cried out that he snapped his fingers at the Duke and us, and that we were all of us a heap of donkeys.[2] I replied by giving him the lie direct and drawing my sword. The old man wanting to be first upon the staircase, tumbled down some steps, and all the rest of them came huddling after him. I rushed onward, brandishing my sword along the walls with fury, and shouting: "I will kill you all!" but I took good care not to do them any harm, as I

[1] *The Florentine slang is Io ho in culo loro e il duca.* [2] *Un monte di asini.*

might too easily have done. In the midst of this tumult the innkeeper screamed out; Lamentone cried, "For God's sake, hold!" some of them exclaimed, "Oh me, my head!" others, "Let me get out from here." In short, it was an indescribable confusion; they looked like a herd of swine. Then the host came with a light, while I withdrew upstairs and put my sword back in its scabbard. Lamentone told Niccolò Benintendi that he had behaved very ill. The host said to him: "It is as much as one's life is worth to draw swords here; and if the Duke were to know of your brawling, he would have you hanged. I will not do to you what you deserve; but take care you never show yourself again in my inn, or it will be the worse for you." Our host then came up to me, and when I began to make him my excuses, he would not suffer me to say a word, but told me that he knew I was entirely in the right, and bade me be upon my guard against those men upon my journey.

LXXVII

After we had supped, a barge-man appeared, and offered to take us to Venice. I asked if he would let us have the boat to ourselves; he was willing, and so we made our bargain. In the morning we rose early, and mounted our horses for the port, which is a few miles distant from Ferrara. On arriving there, we found Niccolò Benintendi's brother, with three comrades, waiting for me. They had among them two lances, and I had bought a stout pike in Ferrara. Being very well armed to boot, I was not at all frightened, as Tribolo was, who cried: "God help

us! those fellows are waiting here to murder us." Lamentone turned to me and said: "The best that you can do is to go back to Ferrara, for I see that the affair is likely to be ugly; for Heaven's sake, Benvenuto, do not risk the fury of these mad beasts." To which I replied: "Let us go forward, for God helps those who have the right on their side; and you shall see how I will help myself. Is not this boat engaged for us?" "Yes," said Lamentone. "Then we will stay in it without them, unless my manhood has deserted me." I put spurs to my horse, and when I was within fifty paces, dismounted and marched boldly forward with my pike. Tribolo stopped behind, all huddled up upon his horse, looking the very image of frost. Lamentone, the courier, meanwhile, was swelling and snorting like the wind. That was his usual habit; but now he did so more than he was wont, being in doubt how this devilish affair would terminate. When I reached the boat, the master presented himself and said that those Florentine gentlemen wanted to embark in it with us, if I was willing. I answered: "The boat is engaged for us and no one else, and it grieves me to the heart that I am not able to have their company." At these words a brave young man of the Magalotti family spoke out: "Benvenuto, we will make you able to have it." To which I answered: "If God and my good cause, together with my own strength of body and mind, possess the will and the power, you shall not make me able to have what you say. So saying I leapt into the boat, and turning my pike's point against them, added: "I'll show you with this weapon that I am

not able." Wishing to prove he was in earnest, Magalotti then seized his own and came toward me. I sprang upon the gunwale and hit him such a blow, that, if he had not tumbled backward, I must have pierced his body. His comrades, in lieu of helping him, turned to fly; and when I saw that I could kill him, instead of striking, I said: "Get up, brother; take your arms and go away. I have shown you that I cannot do what I do not want, and what I had the power to do I have not chosen to do." Then I called for Tribolo, the boatman, and Lamentone to embark; and so we got under way for Venice. When we had gone ten miles on the Po, we sighted those young men, who had got into a skiff and caught us up; and when they were alongside, that idiot Piero Benintendi sang out to me: "Go thy ways this time, Benvenuto; we shall meet in Venice." "Set out betimes then," I shouted, "for I am coming, and any man can meet me where he lists." In due course we arrived at Venice, when I applied to a brother of Cardinal Cornaro, begging him to procure for me the favour of being allowed to carry arms. He advised me to do so without hesitation, saying that the worst risk I ran was that I might lose my sword.

LXXVIII

Accordingly I girded on my sword, and went to visit Jacopo del Sansovino, the sculptor, who had sent for Tribolo. He received me most kindly, and invited us to dinner, and we stayed with him. In course of conversation with Tribolo, he told him that he had no work to give him at the moment, but that he

might call again. Hearing this, I burst out laughing, and said pleasantly to Sansovino: "Your house is too far off from his, if he must call again." Poor Tribolo, all in dismay, exclaimed: "I have got your letter here, which you wrote to bid me come." Sansovino rejoined that men of his sort, men of worth and genius, were free to do that and greater things besides. Tribolo shrugged up his shoulders and muttered: "Patience, patience," several times. Thereupon, without regarding the copious dinner which Sansovino had given me, I took the part of my comrade Tribolo, for he was in the right. All the while at table Sansovino had never stopped chattering about his great achievements, abusing Michel Agnolo and the rest of his fellow-sculptors, while he bragged and vaunted himself to the skies. This had so annoyed me that not a single mouthful which I ate had tasted well; but I refrained from saying more than these two words: "Messer Jacopo, men of worth act like men of worth, and men of genius, who produce things beautiful and excellent, shine forth far better when other people praise them than when they boast so confidently of their own achievements." Upon this he and I rose from table blowing off the steam of our choler. The same day, happening to pass near the Rialto, I met Piero Benintendi in the company of some men; and perceiving that they were going to pick a quarrel with me, I turned into an apothecary's shop till the storm blew over. Afterwards I learned that the young Magalotti, to whom I showed that courtesy, had scolded them roundly; and thus the affair ended.

LXXIX

A few days afterwards we set out on our return to Florence. We lay one night at a place on this side Chioggia, on the left hand as you go toward Ferrara. Here the host insisted upon being paid before we went to bed, and in his own way; and when I observed that it was the custom everywhere else to pay in the morning, he answered: "I insist on being paid overnight, and in my own way." I retorted that men who wanted everything their own way ought to make a world after their own fashion, since things were differently managed here. Our host told me not to go on bothering his brains, because he was determined to do as he had said. Tribolo stood trembling with fear, and nudged me to keep quiet, lest they should do something worse to us; so we paid them in the way they wanted, and afterwards we retired to rest. We had, I must admit, the most capital beds, new in every particular, and as clean as they could be. Nevertheless I did not get one wink of sleep, because I kept on thinking how I could revenge myself. At one time it came into my head to set fire to his house; at another to cut the throats of four fine horses which he had in the stable; I saw well enough that it was easy for me to do all this; but I could not see how it was easy to secure myself and my companion. At last I resolved to put my things and my comrade's on board the boat; and so I did. When the towing-horses had been harnessed to the cable, I ordered the people not to stir before I returned, for I had left a pair of slippers in my bed-

room. Accordingly I went back to the inn and called our host, who told me he had nothing to do with us, and that we might go to Jericho.[1] There was a ragged stable-boy about, half asleep, who cried out to me: "The master would not move to please the Pope, because he has got a wench in bed with him, whom he has been wanting this long while." Then he asked me for a tip, and I gave him a few Venetian coppers, and told him to make the barge-man wait till I had found my slippers and returned. I went upstairs, took out a little knife as sharp as a razor, and cut the four beds that I found there into ribbons. I had the satisfaction of knowing I had done a damage of more than fifty crowns. Then I ran down to the boat with some pieces of the bed-covers[2] in my pouch, and bade the bargee start at once without delay. We had not gone far before my gossip Tribolo said that he had left behind some little straps belonging to his carpet-bag, and that he must be allowed to go back for them. I answered that he need not take thought for a pair of little straps, since I could make him as many big ones as he liked.[3] He told me I was always joking, but that he must really go back for his straps. Then he began ordering the bargee to stop, while I kept ordering him to go on. Meanwhile I informed my friend what kind of trick I had played our host, and showed him specimens of the bed-covers and other things, which threw him into such a quaking fright that he roared out to

[1] *E che noi andassimo al bordello.*

[2] *Sarge. Sargia is interpreted sopraccoperta del letto.*

[3] *The Italian for straps, coregge, has a double meaning, upon which Cellini plays.*

the bargee: "On with you, on with you, as quick as you can!" and never thought himself quite safe until we reached the gates of Florence.

When we arrived there, Tribolo said: "Let us bind our swords up, for the love of God; and play me no more of your games, I beg; for all this while I've felt as though my guts were in the saucepan." I made answer: "Gossip Tribolo, you need not tie your sword up, for you have never loosed it;" and this I said at random, because I never once had seen him act the man upon that journey. When he heard the remark, he looked at his sword and cried out: "In God's name, you speak true! Here it is tied, just as I arranged it before I left my house." My gossip deemed that I had been a bad travelling companion to him, because I resented affronts and defended myself against folk who would have done us injury. But I deemed that he had acted a far worse part with regard to me by never coming to my assistance at such pinches. Let him judge between us who stands by and has no personal interest in our adventures.

LXXX

No sooner had I dismounted than I went to visit Duke Alessandro, and thanked him greatly for his present of the fifty crowns, telling his Excellency that I was always ready to serve him according to my abilities. He gave me orders at once to strike dies for his coinage; and the first I made was a piece of forty soldi, with the Duke's head on one side and San Cosimo and San Damiano on the other.[1] This

[1] *These were the special patrons of the Medicean family, being physician-saints.*

was in silver, and it gave so much satisfaction that the Duke did not hesitate to say they were the best pieces of money in Christendom. The same said all Florence and every one who saw them. Consequently I asked his Excellency to make me appointments,[1] and to grant me the lodgings of the Mint. He bade me remain in his service, and promised he would give me more than I demanded. Meanwhile he said he had commissioned the Master of the Mint, a certain Carlo Acciaiuoli, and that I might go to him for all the money that I wanted. This I found to be true; but I drew my moneys so discreetly, that I had always something to my credit, according to my account.

I then made dies for a giulio,[2] it had San Giovanni in profile, seated with a book in his hand, finer in my judgment than anything which I had done; and on the other side were the armorial bearings of Duke Alessandro. Next I made dies for half-giulios, on which I struck the full face of San Giovanni in small. This was the first coin with a head in full face on so thin a piece of silver that had yet been seen. The difficulty of executing it is apparent only to the eyes of such as are past-masters in these crafts. Afterwards I made dies for the golden crowns; this crown had a cross upon one side with some little cherubim, and on the other side his Excellency's arms.

When I had struck these four sorts, I begged the Duke to make out my appointments and to assign me

[1] *Che mi fermassi una provvisione.*

[2] *The giulio was a coin of 56 Italian centimes or 8 Tuscan crazie, which in Florence was also called barile or gabellotto, because the sum had to be paid as duty on a barrel of wine.*

the lodgings I have mentioned, if he was contented with my service. He told me very graciously that he was quite satisfied, and that he would grant me my request. While we were thus talking, his Excellency was in his wardrobe, looking at a remarkable little gun that had been sent him out of Germany.[1] When he noticed that I too paid particular attention to this pretty instrument, he put it in my hands, saying that he knew how much pleasure I took in such things, and adding that I might choose for earnest of his promises an arquebuse to my own liking from the armoury, excepting only this one piece; he was well aware that I should find things of greater beauty, and not less excellent, there. Upon this invitation, I accepted with thanks; and when he saw me looking round, he ordered his Master of the Wardrobe, a certain Pretino of Lucca, to let me take whatever I liked.[2] Then he went away with the most pleasant words at parting, while I remained, and chose the finest and best arquebuse I ever saw, or ever had, and took it back with me to home.

Two days afterward I brought some drawings which his Excellency had commissioned for gold-work he wanted to give his wife, who was at that time still in Naples.[3] I again asked him to settle my affairs. Then his Excellency told me that he should like me first to execute the die of his portrait in fine style, as I had done for Pope Clement. I began it in wax; and the Duke gave orders, while I was at work

[1] *See above, p. 240, for the right meaning of wardrobe.*

[2] *Messer Francesco of Lucca, surnamed Il Pretino.*

[3] *Margaret of Austria, natural daughter to Charles V., was eventually married in 1536 to Alessandro de' Medici.*

upon it, that whenever I went to take his portrait, I should be admitted. Perceiving that I had a lengthy piece of business on my hands, I sent for a certain Pietro Pagolo from Monte Ritondo, in the Roman district, who had been with me from his boyhood in Rome.[1] I found him with one Bernardonaccio,[2] a goldsmith, who did not treat him well; so I brought him away from there, and taught him minutely how to strike coins from those dies. Meanwhile, I went on making the Duke's portrait; and oftentimes I found him napping after dinner with that Lorenzino of his, who afterwards murdered him, and no other company; and much I marvelled that a Duke of that sort showed such confidence about his safety.[3]

LXXXI

It happened at this time that Ottaviano de' Medici,[4] who to all appearances had got the government of everything in his own hands, favoured the old Master of the Mint against the Duke's will. This man was called Bastiano Cennini, an artist of the antiquated school, and of little skill in his craft.[5] Ottaviano mixed his stupid dies with mine in the coinage of crown-pieces. I complained of this to the Duke,

[1] *Pietro Pagolo Galleotti, much praised by Vasari for his artistic skill.*

[2] *Perhaps Bernardo Sabatini.*

[3] *This is the famous Tuscan Brutus who murdered Alessandro. He was descended from Lorenzo de' Medici, the brother of Cosimo, Pater Patriæ, and the uncle of Lorenzo the Magnificent.*

[4] *This Ottaviano was not descended from either Cosimo or Lorenzo de' Medici, but from an elder, though less illustrious, branch of the great family. He married Francesca Salviati, the aunt of Duke Cosimo. Though a great patron of the arts and an intimate friend of M. A. Buonarroti, he was not popular, owing to his pride of place.*

[5] *Cellini praises this man, however, in the preface to the Oreficeria.*

who, when he saw how the matter stood, took it very ill, and said to me: "Go, tell this to Ottaviano de' Medici, and show him how it is."[1] I lost no time; and when I had pointed out the injury that had been done to my fine coins, he answered, like the donkey that he was: "We choose to have it so." I replied that it ought not to be so, and that I did not choose to have it so. He said: "And if the Duke likes to have it so?" I answered: "It would not suit me, for the thing is neither just nor reasonable." He told me to take myself off, and that I should have to swallow it in this way, even if I burst. Then I returned to the Duke, and related the whole unpleasant conversation between Ottaviano de' Medici and me, entreating his Excellency not to allow the fine coins which I had made for him to be spoiled, and begging for permission to leave Florence. He replied: "Ottaviano is too presuming: you shall have what you want; for this is an injury offered to myself."

That very day, which was a Thursday, I received from Rome a full safe-conduct from the Pope, with advice to go there at once and get the pardon of Our Lady's feast in mid-August, in order that I might clear myself from the penalties attaching to my homicide. I went to the Duke, whom I found in bed, for they told me he was suffering the consequence of a debauch. In little more than two hours I finished what was wanted for his waxen medal; and when I showed it him, it pleased him extremely. Then I exhibited the safe-conduct sent me at the

[1] *Mostragnene. This is perhaps equivalent to mostraglielo.*

order of the Pope, and told him how his Holiness had recalled me to execute certain pieces of work; on this account I should like to regain my footing in the fair city of Rome, which would not prevent my attending to his medal. The Duke made answer half in anger: "Benvenuto, do as I desire: stay here; I will provide for your appointments, and will give you the lodgings in the Mint, with much more than you could ask for, because your requests are only just and reasonable. And who do you think will be able to strike the beautiful dies which you have made for me?" Then I said: "My Lord, I have thought of everything, for I have here a pupil of mine, a young Roman whom I have taught the art; he will serve your Excellency very well till I return with your medal finished, to remain forever in your service. I have in Rome a shop open, with journeymen and a pretty business; as soon as I have got my pardon, I will leave all the devotion of Rome[1] to a pupil of mine there, and will come back, with your Excellency's good permission, to you." During this conversation, the Lorenzino de' Medici whom I have above mentioned was present, and no one else. The Duke frequently signed to him that he should join in pressing me to stay; but Lorenzino never said anything except: "Benvenuto, you would do better to remain where you are." I answered that I wanted by all means to regain my hold on Rome. He made no reply, but continued eyeing the Duke with very

[1] *Tutta la divozione di Roma. It is not very clear what this exactly means. Perhaps "all the affection and reverence I have for the city of Rome," or merely "all my ties in Rome."*

evil glances. When I had finished the medal to my liking, and shut it in its little box, I said to the Duke: "My lord, pray let me have your good-will, for I will make you a much finer medal than the one I made for Pope Clement. It is only reasonable that I should, since that was the first I ever made. Messer Lorenzo here will give me some exquisite reverse, as he is a person learned and of the greatest genius." To these words Lorenzo suddenly made answer: "I have been thinking of nothing else but how to give you a reverse worthy of his Excellency." The Duke laughed a little, and looking at Lorenzo, said: "Lorenzo, you shall give him the reverse, and he shall do it here and shall not go away." Lorenzo took him up at once, saying: "I will do it as quickly as I can, and I hope to do something that shall make the whole world wonder." The Duke, who held him sometimes for a fool and sometimes for a coward, turned about in bed, and laughed at his bragging words. I took my leave without further ceremony, and left them alone together. The Duke, who did not believe that I was really going, said nothing further. Afterwards, when he knew that I was gone, he sent one of his servants, who caught me up at Siena, and gave me fifty golden ducats with a message from the Duke that I should take and use them for his sake, and should return as soon as possible; "and from Messer Lorenzo I have to tell you that he is preparing an admirable reverse for that medal which you want to make." I had left full directions to Petro Pagolo, the Roman above mentioned, how he had to use the dies; but as it was a very delicate

affair, he never quite succeeded in employing them. I remained creditor to the Mint in a matter of more than seventy crowns on account of dies supplied by me.

LXXXII

On the journey to Rome I carried with me that handsome arquebuse which the Duke gave me; and very much to my own pleasure, I used it several times by the way, performing incredible feats by means of it. The little house I had in Strada Giulia was not ready; so I dismounted at the house of Messer Giovanni Gaddi, clerk of the Camera, to whose keeping I had committed, on leaving Rome, many of my arms and other things I cared for. So I did not choose to alight at my shop, but sent for Felice, my partner, and got him to put my little dwelling forthwith into excellent order. The day following, I went to sleep there, after well providing myself with clothes and all things requisite, since I intended to go and thank the Pope next morning.

I had two young serving-lads, and beneath my lodgings lived a laundress who cooked extremely nicely for me. That evening I entertained several friends at supper, and having passed the time with great enjoyment, betook myself to bed. The night had hardly ended, indeed it was more than an hour before daybreak, when I heard a furious knocking at the house-door, stroke succeeding stroke without a moment's pause. Accordingly I called my elder servant, Cencio[1] (he was the man I took into the nec-

[1] *i.e., Vincenzio Romoli.*

romantic circle), and bade him go and see who the madman was that knocked so brutally at that hour of the night. While Cencio was on this errand, I lighted another lamp, for I always keep one by me at night; then I made haste to pass an excellent coat of mail over my shirt, and above that some clothes which I caught up at random. Cencio returned, exclaiming: "Heavens, master! it is the Bargello and all his guard; and he says that if you do not open at once, he will knock the door down. They have torches, and a thousand things besides with them!" I answered: "Tell them that I am huddling my clothes on, and will come out to them in my shirt." Supposing it was a trap laid to murder me, as had before been done by Signor Pier Luigi, I seized an excellent dagger with my right hand, and with the left I took the safe-conduct; then I ran to the back-window, which looked out on gardens, and there I saw more than thirty constables; wherefore I knew that I could not escape upon that side. I made the two lads go in front, and told them to open the door exactly when I gave the word to do so. Then taking up an attitude of defence, with the dagger in my right hand and the safe-conduct in my left, I cried to the lads: "Have no fear, but open!" The Bargello, Vittorio, and the officers sprang inside at once, thinking they could easily lay hands upon me; but when they saw me prepared in that way to receive them, they fell back, exclaiming: "We have a serious job on hand here!" Then I threw the safe-conduct to them, and said: "Read that! and since you cannot seize me, I do not mean that you shall touch me." The Bar-

gello upon this ordered some of his men to arrest me, saying he would look to the safe-conduct later. Thereat I presented my arms boldly, calling aloud: "Let God defend the right! Either I shall escape your hands alive, or be taken a dead corpse!" The room was crammed with men; they made as though they would resort to violence; I stood upon my guard against them; so that the Bargello saw he would not be able to have me except in the way I said. Accordingly he called his clerk, and while the safe-conduct was being read, he showed by signs two or three times that he meant to have me secured by his officers; but this had no effect of shaking my determination. At last they gave up the attempt, threw my safe-conduct on the ground, and went away without their prize.

LXXXIII

When I returned to bed, I felt so agitated that I could not get to sleep again. My mind was made up to let blood as soon as day broke. However, I asked advice of Messer Gaddi, and he referred to a wretched doctor-fellow he employed,[1] who asked me if I had been frightened. Now, just consider what a judicious doctor this was, after I had narrated an occurrence of that gravity, to ask me such a question! He was an empty fribbler, who kept perpetually laughing about nothing at all. Simpering and sniggering, then, he bade me drink a good cup of Greek wine, keep my spirits up, and not be frightened. Messer Giovanni, however, said: "Master, a man of bronze or

[1] *Possibly Bernardino Lilii of Todi.*

marble might be frightened in such circumstances. How much more one of flesh and blood!" The quack responded: "Monsignor, we are not all made after the same pattern; this fellow is no man of bronze or marble, but of pure iron." Then he gave one of his meaningless laughs, and putting his fingers on my wrist, said: "Feel here; this is not a man's pulse, but a lion's or a dragon's." At this, I, whose blood was thumping in my veins, probably far beyond anything which that fool of a doctor had learned from his Hippocrates or Galen, knew at once how serious was my situation; yet, wishing not to add to my uneasiness and to the harm I had already taken, I made show of being in good spirits. While this was happening, Messer Giovanni had ordered dinner, and we all of us sat down to eat in company. I remembered that Messer Lodovico da Fano, Messer Antonio Allegretti, Messer Giovanni Greco, all of them men of the finest scholarship, and Messer Annibal Caro, who was then quite young, were present. At table the conversation turned entirely upon my act of daring. They insisted on hearing the whole story over and over again from my apprentice Cencio, who was a youth of superlative talent, bravery, and extreme personal beauty. Each time that he described my truculent behaviour, throwing himself into the attitudes I had assumed, and repeating the words which I had used, he called up some fresh detail to my memory. They kept asking him if he had been afraid; to which he answered that they ought to ask me if I had been afraid, because he felt precisely the same as I had.

All this chattering grew irksome to me; and since

I still felt strongly agitated, I rose at last from table, saying that I wanted to go and get new clothes of blue silk and stuff for him and me; adding that I meant to walk in procession after four days at the feast of Our Lady, and meant Cencio to carry a white lighted torch on the occasion. Accordingly I took my leave, and had the blue cloth cut, together with a handsome jacket of blue sarcenet and a little doublet of the same; and I had a similar jacket and waistcoat made for Cencio.

When these things had been cut out, I went to see the Pope, who told me to speak with Messer Ambruogio; for he had given orders that I should execute a large piece of golden plate. So I went to find Messer Ambruogio, who had heard the whole of the affair of the Bargello, and had been in concert with my enemies to bring me back to Rome, and had scolded the Bargello for not laying hands on me. The man excused himself by saying that he could not do so in the face of the safe-conduct which I held. Messer Ambruogio now began to talk about the Pope's commission, and bade me make drawings for it, saying that the business should be put at once in train. Meanwhile the feast of Our Lady came round. Now it is the custom for those who get a pardon upon this occasion to give themselves up to prison; in order to avoid doing which I returned to the Pope, and told his Holiness that I was very unwilling to go to prison, and that I begged him to grant me the favour of a dispensation. The Pope answered that such was the custom, and that I must follow it. Thereupon I fell again upon my knees, and

thanked him for the safe-conduct he had given me, saying at the same time that I should go back with it to serve my Duke in Florence, who was waiting for me so impatiently. On hearing this, the Pope turned to one of his confidential servants and said: "Let Benvenuto get his grace without the prison, and see that his *moto proprio* is made out in due form." As soon as the document had been drawn up, his Holiness signed it; it was then registered at the Capitol; afterwards, upon the day appointed, I walked in procession very honourably between two gentlemen, and so got clear at last.

LXXXIV

Four days had passed when I was attacked with violent fever attended by extreme cold; and taking to my bed, I made my mind up that I was sure to die. I had the first doctors of Rome called in, among whom was Francesco da Norcia, a physician of great age, and of the best repute in Rome.[1] I told them what I believed to be the cause of my illness, and said that I had wished to let blood, but that I had been advised against it; and if it was not too late, I begged them to bleed me now. Maestro Francesco answered that it would not be well for me to let blood then, but that if I had done so before, I should have escaped without mischief; at present they would have to treat the case with other remedies. So they began to doctor me as energetically as they were able, while I grew daily worse and worse so rapidly, that after eight days the physicians despaired of my

[1] *Francesco Fusconi, physician to Popes Adrian VI., Clement VII., and Paul III.*

life, and said that I might be indulged in any whim I had to make me comfortable. Maestro Francesco added: "As long as there is breath in him, call me at all hours; for no one can divine what Nature is able to work in a young man of this kind; moreover, if he should lose consciousness, administer these five remedies one after the other, and send for me, for I will come at any hour of the night; I would rather save him than any of the cardinals in Rome."

Every day Messer Giovanni Gaddi came to see me two or three times, and each time he took up one or other of my handsome fowling-pieces, coats of mail, or swords, using words like these: "That is a handsome thing, that other is still handsomer;" and likewise with my models and other trifles, so that at last he drove me wild with annoyance. In his company came a certain Mattio Franzesi;[1] and this man also appeared to be waiting impatiently for my death, not indeed because he would inherit anything from me, but because he wished for what his master seemed to have so much at heart.

Felice, my partner, was always at my side, rendering the greatest services which it is possible for one man to give another. Nature in me was utterly debilitated and undone; I had not strength enough to fetch my breath back if it left me; and yet my brain remained as clear and strong as it had been before my illness. Nevertheless, although I kept my consciousness, a terrible old man used to come to my bedside, and make as though he would drag me by

[1] *Franzesi was a clever Italian poet. His burlesque Capitoli are printed with those of Berni and others.*

force into a huge boat he had with him. This made me call out to my Felice to draw near and chase that malignant old man away. Felice, who loved me most affectionately, ran weeping and crying: "Away with you, old traitor; you are robbing me of all the good I have in this world." Messer Giovanni Gaddi, who was present, then began to say: "The poor fellow is delirious, and has only a few hours to live." His fellow, Mattio Franzesi, remarked: "He has read Dante, and in the prostration of his sickness this apparition has appeared to him;"[1] then he added laughingly: "Away with you, old rascal, and don't bother our friend Benvenuto." When I saw that they were making fun of me, I turned to Messer Gaddi and said: "My dear master, know that I am not raving, and that it is true that this old man is really giving me annoyance; but the best that you can do for me would be to drive that miserable Mattio from my side, who is laughing at my affliction; afterwards if your lordship deigns to visit me again, let me beg you to come with Messer Antonio Allegretti, or with Messer Annibal Caro, or with some other of your accomplished friends, who are persons of quite different intelligence and discretion from that beast." Thereupon Messer Giovanni told Mattio in jest to take himself out of his sight forever; but because Mattio went on laughing, the joke turned to earnest, for Messer Giovanni would not look upon him again, but sent for Messer Antonio Allegretti, Messer Ludovico, and Messer Annibal Caro. On the arrival of these worthy men, I was greatly comforted, and

[1] *Inferno, iii., the verses about Charon.*

talked reasonably with them awhile, not however without frequently urging Felice to drive the old man away. Messer Ludovico asked me what it was I seemed to see, and how the man was shaped. While I portrayed him accurately in words, the old man took me by the arm and dragged me violently towards him. This made me cry out for aid, because he was going to fling me under hatches in his hideous boat. On saying that last word, I fell into a terrible swoon, and seemed to be sinking down into the boat. They say that during that fainting-fit I flung myself about and cast bad words at Messer Giovanni Gaddi, to wit, that he came to rob me, and not from any motive of charity, and other insults of the kind, which caused him to be much ashamed. Later on, they say I lay still like one dead; and after waiting by me more than an hour, thinking I was growing cold, they left me for dead. When they returned home, Mattio Franzesi was informed, who wrote to Florence to Messer Benedetto Varchi, my very dear friend, that they had seen me die at such and such an hour of the night. When he heard the news, that most accomplished man and my dear friend composed an admirable sonnet upon my supposed but not real death, which shall be reported in its proper place.

More than three long hours passed, and yet I did not regain consciousness. Felice having used all the remedies prescribed by Maestro Francesco, and seeing that I did not come to, ran post-haste to the physician's door, and knocked so loudly that he woke him up, and made him rise, and begged him with tears to come to the house, for he thought that I was

dead. Whereto Maestro Francesco, who was a very choleric man, replied: "My son, of what use do you think I should be if I came? If he is dead, I am more sorry than you are. Do you imagine that if I were to come with my medicine I could blow breath up through his guts[1] and bring him back to life for you?" But when he saw that the poor young fellow was going away weeping, he called him back and gave him an oil with which to anoint my pulses and my heart, telling him to pinch my little fingers and toes very tightly, and to send at once to call him if I should revive. Felice took his way, and did as Maestro Francesco had ordered. It was almost bright day when, thinking they would have to abandon hope, they gave orders to have my shroud made and to wash me. Suddenly I regained consciousness, and called out to Felice to drive away the old man on the moment, who kept tormenting me. He wanted to send for Maestro Francesco, but I told him not to do so, but to come close up to me, because that old man was afraid of him and went away at once. So Felice drew near to the bed; I touched him, and it seemed to me that the infuriated old man withdrew; so I prayed him not to leave me for a second.

When Maestro Francesco appeared, he said it was his dearest wish to save my life, and that he had never in all his days seen greater force in a young man than I had. Then he sat down to write, and prescribed for me perfumes, lotions, unctions, plasters, and a heap of other precious things. Meanwhile I came to life again by the means of more than twenty

[1] *Io gli possa soffiare in culo.*

leeches applied to my buttocks, but with my body bored through, bound, and ground to powder. Many of my friends crowded in to behold the miracle of the resuscitated dead man, and among them people of the first importance.

In their presence I declared that the small amount of gold and money I possessed, perhaps some eight hundred crowns, what with gold, silver, jewels, and cash, should be given by my will to my poor sister in Florence, called Mona Liperata; all the remainder of my property, armour and everything besides, I left to my dearest Felice, together with fifty golden ducats, in order that he might buy mourning. At those words Felice flung his arms around my neck, protesting that he wanted nothing but to have me as he wished alive with him. Then I said: "If you want me alive, touch me as you did before, and threaten the old man, for he is afraid of you." At these words some of the folk were terrified, knowing that I was not raving, but talking to the purpose and with all my wits. Thus my wretched malady went dragging on, and I got but little better. Maestro Francesco, that most excellent man, came four or five times a day; Messer Giovanni Gaddi, who felt ashamed, did not visit me again. My brother-in-law, the husband of my sister, arrived; he came from Florence for the inheritance; but as he was a very worthy man, he rejoiced exceedingly to have found me alive. The sight of him did me a world of good, and he began to caress me at once, saying he had only come to take care of me in person; and this he did for several days. Afterwards I sent him away,

having almost certain hope of my recovery. On this occasion he left the sonnet of Messer Benedetto Varchi, which runs as follows:[1]

*"Who shall, Mattio, yield our pain relief?*
*Who shall forbid the sad expense of tears?*
*Alas! 't is true that in his youthful years*
*Our friend hath flown, and left us here to grief.*

*He hath gone up to heaven, who was the chief*
*Of men renowned in art's immortal spheres;*
*Among the mighty dead he had no peers,*
*Nor shall earth see his like, in my belief.*

*O gentle sprite! if love still sway the blest,*
*Look down on him thou here didst love, and view*
*These tears that mourn my loss, not thy great good.*

*There dost thou gaze on His beatitude*
*Who made our universe, and findest true*
*The form of Him thy skill for men expressed."*

LXXXV

My sickness had been of such a very serious nature that it seemed impossible for me to fling it off. That worthy man Maestro Francesco da Norcia redoubled his efforts, and brought me every day fresh remedies, trying to restore strength to my miserable unstrung frame. Yet all these endeavours were apparently insufficient to overcome the obstinacy of my

[1] *This sonnet is so insipid, so untrue to Cellini's real place in art, so false to the far from saintly character of the man, that I would rather have declined translating it, had I not observed it to be a good example of that technical and conventional insincerity which was invading Italy at this epoch. Varchi was really sorry to hear the news of Cellini's death; but for his genuine emotion he found spurious vehicles of utterance. Cellini, meanwhile, had a right to prize it, since it revealed to him what friendship was prepared to utter after his decease.*

malady, so that the physicians were in despair and at their wits' ends what to do. I was tormented by thirst, but had abstained from drinking for many days according to the doctors' orders. Felice, who thought he had done wonders in restoring me, never left my side. That old man ceased to give so much annoyance, yet sometimes he appeared to me in dreams.

One day Felice had gone out of doors, leaving me under the care of a young apprentice and a servant-maid called Beatrice. I asked the apprentice what had become of my lad Cencio, and what was the reason why I had never seen him in attendance on me. The boy replied that Cencio had been far more ill than I was, and that he was even at death's door. Felice had given them orders not to speak to me of this. On hearing the news, I was exceedingly distressed; then I called the maid Beatrice, a Pistojan girl, and asked her to bring me a great crystal water-cooler which stood near, full of clear and fresh water. She ran at once, and brought it to me full; I told her to put it to my lips, adding that if she let me take a draught according to my heart's content, I would give her a new gown. This maid had stolen from me certain little things of some importance, and in her fear of being detected, she would have been very glad if I had died. Accordingly she allowed me twice to take as much as I could of the water, so that in good earnest I swallowed more than a flask full.[1] I then covered myself, and began to sweat, and fell into a deep sleep. After I had slept about an

[1] *Un fiasco, holding more than a quart.*

hour, Felice came home and asked the boy how I was getting on. He answered: "I do not know. Beatrice brought him that cooler full of water, and he has drunk almost the whole of it. I don't know now whether he is alive or dead." They say that my poor friend was on the point of falling to the ground, so grieved was he to hear this. Afterwards he took an ugly stick and began to beat the serving-girl with all his might, shouting out: "Ah! traitress, you have killed him for me then?" While Felice was cudgelling and she screaming, I was in a dream; I thought the old man held ropes in his hand, and while he was preparing to bind me, Felice had arrived and struck him with an axe, so that the old man fled exclaiming: "Let me go, and I promise not to return for a long while." Beatrice in the meantime had run into my bedroom shrieking loudly. This woke me up, and I called out: "Leave her alone; perhaps, when she meant to do me harm, she did me more good than you were able to do with all your efforts. She may indeed have saved my life; so lend me a helping hand, for I have sweated; and be quick about it." Felice recovered his spirits, dried and made me comfortable; and I, being conscious of a great improvement in my state, began to reckon on recovery.

When Maestro Francesco appeared and saw my great improvement, and the servant-girl in tears, and the prentice running to and fro, and Felice laughing, all this disturbance made him think that something extraordinary must have happened, which had been the cause of my amendment. Just then the other

doctor, Bernardino, put in his appearance, who at the beginning of my illness had refused to bleed me. Maestro Francesco, that most able man, exclaimed: "Oh, power of Nature! She knows what she requires, and the physicians know nothing." That simpleton, Maestro Bernardino, made answer, saying: "If he had drunk another bottle he would have been cured upon the spot." Maestro Francesco da Norcia, a man of age and great authority, said: "That would have been a terrible misfortune, and would to God that it may fall on you!" Afterwards he turned to me and asked if I could have drunk more water. I answered: "No, because I had entirely quenched my thirst." Then he turned to Maestro Bernardino, and said: "Look you how Nature has taken precisely what she wanted, neither more nor less. In like manner she was asking for what she wanted when the poor young man begged you to bleed him. If you knew that his recovery depended upon his drinking two flasks of water, why did you not say so before? You might then have boasted of his cure." At these words the wretched quack sulkily departed, and never showed his face again.

Maestro Francesco then gave orders that I should be removed from my room and carried to one of the hills there are in Rome. Cardinal Cornaro, when he heard of my improvement, had me transported to a place of his on Monte Cavallo. That very evening I was taken with great precautions in a chair, well wrapped up and protected from the cold. No sooner had I reached the place than I began to vomit, during which there came from my stomach a hairy

worm about a quarter of a cubit in length: the hairs were long, and the worm was very ugly, speckled of divers colours, green, black, and red. They kept and showed it to the doctor, who said he had never seen anything of the sort before, and afterwards remarked to Felice: "Now take care of your Benvenuto, for he is cured. Do not permit him any irregularities; for though he has escaped this time, another disorder now would be the death of him. You see his malady has been so grave, that if we had brought him the extreme unction, we might not have been in time. Now I know that with a little patience and time he will live to execute more of his fine works." Then he turned to me and said: "My Benvenuto, be prudent, commit no excesses, and when you are quite recovered, I beg you to make me a Madonna with your own hand, and I will always pay my devotions to it for your sake." This I promised to do, and then asked him whether it would be safe for me to travel so far as to Florence. He advised me to wait till I was stronger, and till we could observe how Nature worked in me.

LXXXVI

When eight days had come and gone, my amendment was so slight that life itself became almost a burden to me; indeed I had been more than fifty days in that great suffering. So I made my mind up, and prepared to travel. My dear Felice and I went toward Florence in a pair of baskets;[1] and as I had

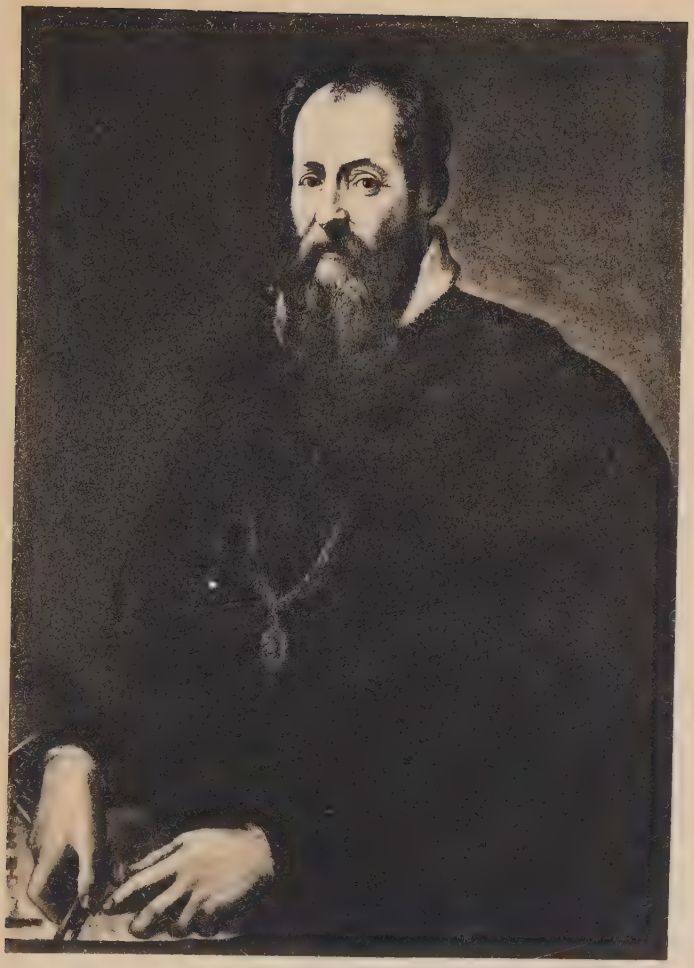
[1] *Un paio di ceste, a kind of litter, here described in the plural, because two of them were perhaps put together. I have thought it best to translate the phrase*

not written, when I reached my sister's house, she wept and laughed over me all in one breath. That day many of my friends came to see me; among others Pier Landi, who was the best and dearest friend I ever had. Next day there came a certain Niccolò da Monte Aguto, who was also a very great friend of mine. Now he had heard the Duke say: "Benvenuto would have done much better to die, because he is come to put his head into a noose, and I will never pardon him." Accordingly when Niccolò arrived, he said to me in desperation: "Alas! my dear Benvenuto, what have you come to do here? Did you not know what you have done to displease the Duke? I have heard him swear that you were thrusting your head into a halter." Then I replied: "Niccolò, remind his Excellency that Pope Clement wanted to do as much to me before, and quite as unjustly; tell him to keep his eye on me, and give me time to recover; then I will show his Excellency that I have been the most faithful servant he will ever have in all his life; and forasmuch as some enemy must have served me this bad turn through envy, let him wait till I get well; for I shall then be able to give such an account of myself as will make him marvel."

This bad turn had been done me by Giorgetto Vassellario of Arezzo,[1] the painter; perchance in recompense for many benefits conferred on him. I had harboured him in Rome and provided for his costs, while he had turned my whole house upside down;

*literally. From a letter of Varchi to Bembo, we learn that Cellini reached Florence, November 9, 1535.*

[1] *This is the famous Giorgio Vasari, a bad painter and worse architect, but dear to all lovers of the arts for his anecdotic work upon Italian artists.*



GIORGIO VASARI
(BY HIMSELF)

for the man was subject to a species of dry scab, which he was always in the habit of scratching with his hands. It happened, then, that sleeping in the same bed as an excellent workman, named Manno, who was in my service, when he meant to scratch himself, he tore the skin from one of Manno's legs with his filthy claws, the nails of which he never used to cut. The said Manno left my service, and was resolutely bent on killing him. I made the quarrel up, and afterwards got Giorgio into Cardinal de' Medici's household, and continually helped him. For these deserts, then, he told Duke Alessandro that I had abused his Excellency, and had bragged I meant to be the first to leap upon the walls of Florence with his foes the exiles. These words, as I afterwards learned, had been put into Vasari's lips by that excellent fellow[1] Ottaviano de' Medici, who wanted to revenge himself for the Duke's irritation against him, on account of the coinage and my departure from Florence. I, being innocent of the crime falsely ascribed to me, felt no fear whatever. Meanwhile that able physician Francesco da Monte Varchi attended to my cure with great skill. He had been brought by my very dear friend Luca Martini, who passed the larger portion of the day with me.[2]

LXXXVII

During this while I had sent my devoted comrade Felice back to Rome, to look after our business there.

[1] *Galantuomo, used ironically.*

[2] *Luca Martini was a member of the best literary society in his days, and the author of some famous burlesque pieces.*

When I could raise my head a little from the bolster, which was at the end of fifteen days, although I was unable to walk upon my feet, I had myself carried to the palace of the Medici, and placed upon the little upper terrace. There they seated me to wait until the Duke went by. Many of my friends at court came up to greet me, and expressed surprise that I had undergone the inconvenience of being carried in that way, while so shattered by illness; they said that I ought to have waited till I was well, and then to have visited the Duke. A crowd of them collected, all looking at me as a sort of miracle; not merely because they had heard that I was dead, but far more because I had the look of a dead man. Then publicly, before them all, I said how some wicked scoundrel had told my lord the Duke that I had bragged I meant to be the first to scale his Excellency's walls, and also that I had abused him personally; wherefore I had not the heart to live or die till I had purged myself of that infamy, and found out who the audacious rascal was who had uttered such calumnies against me. At these words a large number of those gentlemen came round, expressing great compassion for me; one said one thing, one another, and I told them I would never go thence before I knew who had accused me. At these words Maestro Agostino, the Duke's tailor, made his way through all those gentlemen, and said: "If that is all you want to know, you shall know it at this very moment."

Giorgio the painter, whom I have mentioned, happened just then to pass, and Maestro Agostino exclaimed: "There is the man who accused you; now

you know yourself if it be true or not." As fiercely as I could, not being able to leave my seat, I asked Giorgio if it was true that he had accused me. He denied that it was so, and that he had ever said anything of the sort. Maestro Agostino retorted: "You gallows-bird! don't you know that I know it for most certain?" Giorgio made off as quickly as he could, repeating that he had not accused me. Then, after a short while, the Duke came by; whereupon I had myself raised up before his Excellency, and he halted. I told him that I had come there in that way solely in order to clear my character. The Duke gazed at me, and marvelled I was still alive; afterwards he bade me take heed to be an honest man and regain my health.

When I reached home, Niccolò da Monte Aguto came to visit me, and told me that I had escaped one of the most dreadful perils in the world, quite contrary to all his expectations, for he had seen my ruin written with indelible ink; now I must make haste to get well, and afterwards take French leave, because my jeopardy came from a quarter and a man who was able to destroy me. He then said, "Beware," and added: "What displeasure have you given to that rascal Ottaviano de' Medici?" I answered that I had done nothing to displease him, but that he had injured me; and told him all the affair about the Mint. He repeated: "Get hence as quickly as you can, and be of good courage, for you will see your vengeance executed sooner than you expect." I paid the best attention to my health, gave Pietro Pagolo advice about stamping the coins, and then went off

upon my way to Rome without saying a word to the Duke or anybody else.

LXXXVIII

When I reached Rome, and had enjoyed the company of my friends awhile, I began the Duke's medal. In a few days I finished the head in steel, and it was the finest work of the kind which I had ever produced. At least once every day there came to visit me a sort of blockhead named Messer Francesco Soderini.[1] When he saw what I was doing, he used frequently to exclaim: "Barbarous wretch! you want then to immortalise that ferocious tyrant! You have never made anything so exquisite, which proves you our inveterate foe and their devoted friend; and yet the Pope and he have had it twice in mind to hang you without any fault of yours. That was the Father and the Son; now beware of the Holy Ghost." It was firmly believed that Duke Alessandro was the son of Pope Clement. Messer Francesco used also to say and swear by all his saints that, if he could, he would have robbed me of the dies for that medal. I responded that he had done well to tell me so, and that I would take such care of them that he should never see them more.

I now sent to Florence to request Lorenzino that he would send me the reverse of the medal. Niccolò da Monte Aguto, to whom I had written, wrote back, saying that he had spoken to that mad melancholy philosopher Lorenzino for it; he had replied that he was thinking night and day of nothing else,

[1] *He had been banished in* 1530 *as a foe to the Medicean house.*

and that he would finish it as soon as he was able. Nevertheless, I was not to set my hopes upon his reverse, but I had better invent one out of my own head, and when I had finished it, I might bring it without hesitation to the Duke, for this would be to my advantage.

I composed the design of a reverse which seemed to me appropriate, and pressed the work forward to my best ability. Not being, however, yet recovered from that terrible illness, I gave myself frequent relaxation by going out on fowling expeditions with my friend Felice. This man had no skill in my art; but since we were perpetually day and night together, everybody thought he was a first-rate craftsman. This being so, as he was a fellow of much humour, we used often to laugh together about the great credit he had gained. His name was Felice Guadagni (Gain), which made him say in jest: "I should be called Felice Gain-little if you had not enabled me to acquire such credit that I can call myself Gain-much." I replied that there are two ways of gaining: the first is that by which one gains for one's self, the second that by which one gains for others; so I praised him much more for the second than the first, since he had gained for me my life.

We often held such conversations; but I remember one in particular on the day of Epiphany, when we were together near La Magliana. It was close upon nightfall, and during the day I had shot a good number of ducks and geese; then, as I had almost made my mind up to shoot no more that time, we were returning briskly toward Rome. Calling to my dog

by his name, Barucco, and not seeing him in front of me, I turned round and noticed that the well-trained animal was pointing at some geese which had settled in a ditch. I therefore dismounted at once, got my fowling-piece ready, and at a very long range brought two of them down with a single ball. I never used to shoot with more than one ball, and was usually able to hit my mark at two hundred cubits, which cannot be done by other ways of loading. Of the two geese, one was almost dead, and the other, though badly wounded, was flying lamely. My dog retrieved the one and brought it to me; but noticing that the other was diving down into the ditch, I sprang forward to catch it. Trusting to my boots, which came high up the leg, I put one foot forward; it sank in the oozy ground; and so, although I got the goose, the boot of my right leg was full of water. I lifted my foot and let the water run out; then, when I had mounted, we made haste for Rome. The cold, however, was very great, and I felt my leg freeze, so that I said to Felice: "We must do something to help this leg, for I don't know how to bear it longer." The good Felice, without a word, leapt from his horse, and gathering some thistles and bits of stick, began to build a fire. I meanwhile was waiting, and put my hands among the breast-feathers of the geese, and felt them very warm. So I told him not to make the fire, but filled my boot with the feathers of the goose, and was immediately so much comforted that I regained vitality.

LXXXIX

We mounted, and rode rapidly toward Rome; and when we had reached a certain gently rising ground —night had already fallen—looking in the direction of Florence, both with one breath exclaimed in the utmost astonishment: "O God of heaven! what is that great thing one sees there over Florence?" It resembled a huge beam of fire, which sparkled and gave out extraordinary lustre.

I said to Felice: "Assuredly we shall hear to-morrow that something of vast importance has happened in Florence." As we rode into Rome, the darkness was extreme; and when we came near the Banchi and our own house, my little horse was going in an amble at a furious speed. Now that day they had thrown a heap of plaster and broken tiles in the middle of the road, which neither my horse nor myself perceived. In his fiery pace the beast ran up it; but on coming down upon the other side he turned a complete somersault. He had his head between his legs, and it was only through the power of God himself that I escaped unhurt. The noise we made brought the neighbours out with lights; but I had already jumped to my feet; and so, without remounting, I ran home, laughing to have come unhurt out of an accident enough to break my neck.

On entering the house, I found some friends of mine there, to whom, while we were supping together, I related the adventures of the day's chase and the diabolical apparition of the fiery beam which we had seen. They exclaimed: "What shall we hear

to-morrow which this portent has announced?" I answered: "Some revolution must certainly have occurred in Florence." So we supped agreeably; and late the next day there came the news to Rome of Duke Alessandro's death.[1] Upon this many of my acquaintances came to me and said: "You were right in conjecturing that something of great importance had happened at Florence." Just then Francesco Soderini appeared jogging along upon a wretched mule he had, and laughing all the way like a madman. He said to me: "This is the reverse of that vile tyrant's medal which your Lorenzino de' Medici promised you." Then he added: "You wanted to immortalise the dukes for us; but we mean to have no more dukes:" and thereupon he jeered me, as though I had been the captain of the factions which make dukes. Meanwhile a certain Baccio Bettini,[2] who had an ugly big head like a bushel, came up and began to banter me in the same way about dukes, calling out: "We have dis-duked them, and won't have any more of them; and you were for making them immortal for us!" with many other tiresome quips of the same kind. I lost my patience at this nonsense, and said to them: "You blockheads! I am a poor goldsmith, who serve whoever pays me; and you are jeering me as though I were a party-leader. However, this shall not make me cast in your teeth the insatiable greediness, idiotcy, and good-for-nothingness of your predecessors. But this one answer

[1] *Alessandro was murdered by his cousin Lorenzino at Florence on the 5th of January 1537.*

[2] *Bettini was an intimate friend of Buonarroti and a considerable patron of the arts.*

I will make to all your silly railleries; that before two or three days at the longest have passed by, you will have another duke, much worse perhaps than he who now has left you."[1]

The following day Bettini came to my shop and said: "There is no need to spend money in couriers, for you know things before they happen. What spirit tells them to you?" Then he informed me that Cosimo de' Medici, the son of Signor Giovanni, was made Duke; but that certain conditions had been imposed at his election, which would hold him back from kicking up his heels at his own pleasure. I now had my opportunity for laughing at them, and saying: "Those men of Florence have set a young man upon a mettlesome horse; next they have buckled spurs upon his heels, and put the bridle freely in his hands, and turned him out upon a magnificent field, full of flowers and fruits and all delightful things; next they have bidden him not to cross certain indicated limits: now tell me, you, who there is that can hold him back, whenever he has but the mind to cross them? Laws cannot be imposed on him who is the master of the law." So they left me alone, and gave me no further annoyance.[2]

XC

I now began to attend to my shop, and did some business, not however of much moment, because I

[1] *This exchange of ironical compliments testifies to Cellini's strong Medicean leanings, and also to the sagacity with which he judged the political situation.*

[2] *Cellini only spoke the truth on this occasion; for Cosimo soon kicked down the ladder which had lifted him to sovereignty, and showed himself the absolute master of Florence. Cosimo was elected Duke upon the 9th of January* 1537.

had still to think about my health, which was not yet established after that grave illness I had undergone. About this time the Emperor returned victorious from his expedition against Tunis, and the Pope sent for me to take my advice concerning the present of honour it was fit to give him.[1] I answered that it seemed to me most appropriate to present his Imperial Majesty with a golden crucifix, for which I had almost finished an ornament quite to the purpose, and which would confer the highest honour upon his Holiness and me. I had already made three little figures of gold in the round, about a palm high; they were those which I had begun for the chalice of Pope Clement, representing Faith, Hope, and Charity. To these I added in wax what was wanting for the basement of the cross. I carried the whole to the Pope, with the Christ in wax, and many other exquisite decorations which gave him complete satisfaction. Before I took leave of his Holiness, we had agreed on every detail, and calculated the price of the work.

This was one evening four hours after nightfall, and the Pope had ordered Messer Latino Juvenale to see that I had money paid to me next morning. This Messer Latino, who had a pretty big dash of the fool in his composition, bethought him of furnishing the Pope with a new idea, which was, however, wholly of his own invention. So he altered everything which had been arranged; and next morning, when I went for the money, he said with his usual brutal arrogance: "It is our part to invent, and

[1] *Cellini returns to the year 1535, when Charles V. arrived in November from Tunis.*

CHARLES V
(TITIAN)

yours to execute; before I left the Pope last night we thought of something far superior." To these first words I answered, without allowing him to proceed farther: "Neither you nor the Pope can think of anything better than a piece in which Christ plays a part; so you may go on with your courtier's nonsense till you have no more to say."

Without uttering one word, he left me in a rage, and tried to get the work given to another goldsmith. The Pope, however, refused, and sent for me at once, and told me I had spoken well, but that they wanted to make use of a Book of Hours of Our Lady, which was marvellously illuminated, and had cost the Cardinal de' Medici more than two thousand crowns. They thought that this would be an appropriate present to the Empress, and that for the Emperor they would afterwards make what I had suggested, which was indeed a present worthy of him; but now there was no time to lose, since the Emperor was expected in Rome in about a month and a half. He wanted the book to be enclosed in a case of massive gold, richly worked, and adorned with jewels valued at about six thousand crowns. Accordingly, when the jewels and the gold were given me, I began the work, and driving it briskly forward, in a few days brought it to such beauty that the Pope was astonished, and showed me the most distinguished signs of favour, conceding at the same time that that beast Juvenale should have nothing more to do with me.

I had nearly brought my work to its completion when the Emperor arrived, and numerous triumphal arches of great magnificence were erected in his

honour. He entered Rome with extraordinary pomp, the description of which I leave to others, since I mean to treat of those things only which concern myself.[1] Immediately after his arrival, he gave the Pope a diamond which he had bought for twelve thousand crowns. This diamond the Pope committed to my care, ordering me to make a ring to the measure of his Holiness's finger; but first he wished me to bring the book in the state to which I had advanced it. I took it accordingly, and he was highly pleased with it; then he asked my advice concerning the apology which could be reasonably made to the Emperor for the unfinished condition of my work. I said that my indisposition would furnish a sound excuse, since his Majesty, seeing how thin and pale I was, would very readily believe and accept it. To this the Pope replied that he approved of the suggestion, but that I should add on the part of his Holiness, when I presented the book to the Emperor, that I made him the present of myself. Then he told me in detail how I had to behave, and the words I had to say. These words I repeated to the Pope, asking him if he wished me to deliver them in that way. He replied: "You would acquit yourself to admiration if you had the courage to address the Emperor as you are addressing me." Then I said that I had the courage to speak with far greater ease and freedom to the Emperor, seeing that the Emperor was clothed as I was, and that I should seem to be speaking to a man formed like myself; this was not the case when I addressed his Holiness, in whom I beheld a far supe-

[1] *The entry into Rome took place April 6, 1536.*

rior deity, both by reason of his ecclesiastical adornments, which shed a certain aureole about him, and at the same time because of his Holiness's dignity of venerable age; all these things inspired in me more awe than the Imperial Majesty. To these words the Pope responded: "Go, my Benvenuto; you are a man of ability; do us honour, and it will be well for you."

XCI

The Pope ordered out two Turkish horses, which had belonged to Pope Clement, and were the most beautiful that ever came to Christendom. Messer Durante,[1] his chamberlain, was bidden to bring them through the lower galleries of the palace, and there to give them to the Emperor, repeating certain words which his Holiness dictated to him. We both went down together, and when we reached the presence of the Emperor, the horses made their entrance through those halls with so much spirit and such a noble carriage that the Emperor and every one were struck with wonder. Thereupon Messer Durante advanced in so graceless a manner, and delivered his speech with so much of Brescian lingo, mumbling his words over in his mouth, that one never saw or heard anything worse; indeed the Emperor could not refrain from smiling at him. I meanwhile had already uncovered my piece; and observing that the Emperor had turned his eyes towards me with a very gracious look, I advanced at once and said: "Sacred Majesty, our most holy Father, Pope Paolo,

[1] *Messer Durante Duranti, Prefect of the Camera under Paul III., who gave him the hat in 1544, and the Bishopric of Brescia afterwards.*

sends this book of the Virgin as a present to your Majesty, the which is written in a fair clerk's hand, and illuminated by the greatest master who ever professed that art; and this rich cover of gold and jewels is unfinished, as you here behold it, by reason of my illness: wherefore his Holiness, together with the book, presents me also, and attaches me to your Majesty in order that I may complete the work; nor this alone, but everything which you may have it in your mind to execute so long as life is left me, will I perform at your service." Thereto the Emperor responded: "The book is acceptable to me, and so are you; but I desire you to complete it for me in Rome; when it is finished, and you are restored to health, bring it me and come to see me." Afterwards, in course of conversation, he called me by my name, which made me wonder, because no words had been dropped in which my name occurred; and he said that he had seen that fastening of Pope Clement's cope, on which I had wrought so many wonderful figures. We continued talking in this way a whole half hour, touching on divers topics artistic and agreeable; then, since it seemed to me that I had acquitted myself with more honour than I had expected, I took the occasion of a slight lull in the conversation to make my bow and to retire. The Emperor was heard to say: "Let five hundred golden crowns be given at once to Benvenuto." The person who brought them up asked who the Pope's man was who had spoken to the Emperor. Messer Durante came forward and robbed me of my five hundred crowns. I complained to the Pope, who told me

not to be uneasy, for he knew how everything had happened, and how well I had conducted myself in addressing the Emperor, and of the money I should certainly obtain my share.

XCII

When I returned to my shop, I set my hand with diligence to finishing the diamond ring, concerning which the four first jewellers of Rome were sent to consult with me. This was because the Pope had been informed that the diamond had been set by the first jeweller of the world in Venice; he was called Maestro Miliano Targhetta; and the diamond being somewhat thin, the job of setting it was too difficult to be attempted without great deliberation. I was well pleased to receive these four jewellers, among whom was a man of Milan called Gaio. He was the most presumptuous donkey in the world, the one who knew least and who thought he knew most; the others were very modest and able craftsmen. In the presence of us all this Gaio began to talk, and said: "Miliano's foil should be preserved, and to do that, Benvenuto, you shall doff your cap;[1] for just as giving diamonds a tint is the most delicate and difficult thing in the jeweller's art, so is Miliano the greatest jeweller that ever lived, and this is the most difficult diamond to tint." I replied that it was all the greater glory for me to compete with so able a master in such an excellent profession. Afterwards

[1] *In the Oreficeria Cellini gives an account of how these foils were made and applied. They were composed of paste, and coloured so as to enhance the effect of precious stones, particularly diamonds.*

I turned to the other jewellers and said: "Look here! I am keeping Miliano's foil, and I will see whether I can improve on it with some of my own manufacture; if not, we will tint it with the same you see here." That ass Gaio exclaimed that if I made a foil like that he would gladly doff his cap to it. To which I replied: "Supposing then I make it better, it will deserve two bows." "Certainly so," said he; and I began to compose my foils.

I took the very greatest pains in mixing the tints, the method of doing which I will explain in the proper place.[1] It is certain that the diamond in question offered more difficulties than any others which before or afterwards have come into my hands, and Miliano's foil was made with true artistic skill. However, that did not dismay me; but having sharpened my wits up, I succeeded not only in making something quite as good, but in exceeding it by far. Then, when I saw that I had surpassed him, I went about to surpass myself, and produced a foil by new processes which was a long way better than what I had previously made. Thereupon I sent for the jewellers; and first I tinted the diamond with Miliano's foil; then I cleaned it well and tinted it afresh with my own. When I showed it to the jewellers, one of the best among them, who was called Raffael del Moro, took the diamond in his hand and said to Gaio: "Benvenuto has outdone the foil of Miliano." Gaio, unwilling to believe it, took the diamond and said: "Benvenuto, this diamond is worth two thousand ducats more than with the foil of Miliano." I rejoined:

[1] *Oreficeria, cap. i.*

"Now that I have surpassed Miliano, let us see if I can surpass myself." Then I begged them to wait for me a while, went up into a little cabinet, and having tinted the diamond anew unseen by them, returned and showed it to the jewellers. Gaio broke out at once: "This is the most marvellous thing that I have ever seen in the course of my whole lifetime. The stone is worth upwards of eighteen thousand crowns, whereas we valued it at barely twelve thousand." The other jewellers turned to him and said: "Benvenuto is the glory of our art, and it is only due that we should doff our caps to him and to his foils." Then Gaio said: "I shall go and tell the Pope, and I mean to procure for him one thousand golden crowns for the setting of this diamond." Accordingly he hurried to the Pope and told him the whole story; whereupon his Holiness sent three times on that day to see if the ring was finished.

At twenty-three o'clock I took the ring to the palace; and since the doors were always open to me, I lifted the curtain gently, and saw the Pope in private audience with the Marchese del Guasto.[1] The Marquis must have been pressing something on the Pope which he was unwilling to perform; for I heard him say: "I tell you, no; it is my business to remain neutral, and nothing else." I was retiring as quickly as I could, when the Pope himself called me back; so I entered the room, and presented the diamond ring, upon which he drew me aside, and the Marquis retired to a distance. While looking at the diamond,

[1] *Alfonson d'Avalos, successor and heir to the famous Ferdinando d'Avalos, Marquis of Pescara. He acted for many years as Spanish Viceroy of Milan.*

the Pope whispered to me: "Benvenuto, begin some conversation with me on a subject which shall seem important, and do not stop talking so long as the Marquis remains in this room." Then he took to walking up and down; and the occasion making for my advantage, I was very glad to discourse with him upon the methods I had used to tint the stone. The Marquis remained standing apart, leaning against a piece of tapestry; and now he balanced himself about on one foot, now on the other. The subject I had chosen to discourse upon was of such importance, if fully treated, that I could have talked about it at least three hours. The Pope was entertained to such a degree that he forgot the annoyance of the Marquis standing there. I seasoned what I had to say with that part of natural philosophy which belongs to our profession; and so having spoken for near upon an hour, the Marquis grew tired of waiting, and went off fuming. Then the Pope bestowed on me the most familiar caresses which can be imagined, and exclaimed: "Have patience, my dear Benvenuto, for I will give you a better reward for your virtues than the thousand crowns which Gaio tells me your work is worth."

On this I took my leave; and the Pope praised me in the presence of his household, among whom was the fellow Latino Juvenale, whom I have previously mentioned. This man, having become my enemy, assiduously strove to do me hurt; and noticing that the Pope talked of me with so much affection and warmth, he put in his word: "There is no doubt at all that Benvenuto is a person of very remarkable

genius; but while every one is naturally bound to feel more good-will for his own countrymen than for others, still one ought to consider maturely what language it is right and proper to use when speaking of a Pope. He has had the audacity to say that Pope Clement indeed was the handsomest sovereign that ever reigned, and no less gifted; only that luck was always against him: and he says that your Holiness is quite the opposite; that the tiara seems to weep for rage upon your head; that you look like a truss of straw with clothes on, and that there is nothing in you except good luck." These words, reported by a man who knew most excellently how to say them, had such force that they gained credit with the Pope. Far from having uttered them, such things had never come into my head. If the Pope could have done so without losing credit, he would certainly have taken fierce revenge upon me; but being a man of great tact and talent, he made a show of turning it off with a laugh. Nevertheless he harboured in his heart a deep vindictive feeling against me, of which I was not slow to be aware, since I had no longer the same easy access to his apartments as formerly, but found the greatest difficulty in procuring audience. As I had now for many years been familiar with the manners of the Roman court, I conceived that some one had done me a bad turn; and on making dexterous inquiries, I was told the whole, but not the name of my calumniator. I could not imagine who the man was; had I but found him out, my vengeance would not have been measured by troy weight.[1]

[1] *Io ne arei fatte vendette a misura di carbone.*

XCIII

I went on working at my book, and when I had finished it I took it to the Pope, who was in good truth unable to refrain from commending it greatly. I begged him to send me with it to the Emperor, as he had promised. He replied that he would do what he thought fit, and that I had performed my part of the business. So he gave orders that I should be well paid. These two pieces of work, on which I had spent upwards of two months, brought me in five hundred crowns: for the diamond I was paid one hundred and fifty crowns and no more; the rest was given me for the cover of the book, which, however, was worth more than a thousand, being enriched with multitudes of figures, arabesques, enamellings, and jewels. I took what I could get, and made my mind up to leave Rome without permission. The Pope meanwhile sent my book to the Emperor by the hand of his grandson, Signor Sforza.[1] Upon accepting it, the Emperor expressed great satisfaction, and immediately asked for me. Young Signor Sforza, who had received his instructions, said that I had been prevented by illness from coming. All this was reported to me.

My preparations for the journey into France were made; and I wished to go alone, but was unable on account of a lad in my service called Ascanio. He was of very tender age, and the most admirable servant in the world. When I took him he had left a former

[1] *Sforza Sforza, son of Bosio, Count of Santa Fiore, and of Costanza Farnese, the Pope's natural daughter. He was a youth of sixteen at this epoch.*

master, named Francesco, a Spaniard and a goldsmith. I did not much like to take him, lest I should get into a quarrel with the Spaniard, and said to Ascanio: "I do not want to have you, for fear of offending your master." He contrived that his master should write me a note informing me that I was free to take him. So he had been with me some months; and since he came to us both thin and pale of face, we called him "the little old man;" indeed I almost thought he was one, partly because he was so good a servant, and partly because he was so clever that it seemed unlikely he should have such talent at thirteen years, which he affirmed his age to be. Now to go back to the point from which I started, he improved in person during those few months, and gaining in flesh, became the handsomest youth in Rome. Being the excellent servant which I have described, and showing marvellous aptitude for our art, I felt a warm and fatherly affection for him, and kept him clothed as if he had been my own son. When the boy perceived the improvement he had made, he esteemed it a good piece of luck that he had come into my hands; and he used frequently to go and thank his former master, who had been the cause of his prosperity. Now this man had a handsome young woman to wife, who said to him: "Surgetto" (that was what they called him when he lived with them), "what have you been doing to become so handsome?" Ascanio answered: "Madonna Francesca, it is my master who has made me so handsome, and far more good to boot." In her petty spiteful way she took it very ill that Ascanio should speak so;

and having no reputation for chastity, she contrived to caress the lad more perhaps than was quite seemly, which made me notice that he began to visit her more frequently than his wont had been.

One day Ascanio took to beating one of our little shopboys, who, when I came home from out of doors, complained to me with tears that Ascanio had knocked him about without any cause. Hearing this, I said to Ascanio: "With cause or without cause, see you never strike any one of my family, or else I'll make you feel how I can strike myself." He bandied words with me, which made me jump on him and give him the severest drubbing with both fists and feet that he had ever felt. As soon as he escaped my clutches, he ran away without cape or cap, and for two days I did not know where he was, and took no care to find him. After that time a Spanish gentleman, called Don Diego, came to speak to me. He was the most generous man in the world. I had made, and was making, some things for him, which had brought us well acquainted. He told me that Ascanio had gone back to his old master, and asked me, if I thought it proper, to send him the cape and cap which I had given him. Thereupon I said that Francesco had behaved badly, and like a low-bred fellow; for if he had told me, when Ascanio first came back to him, that he was in his house, I should very willingly have given him leave; but now that he had kept him two days without informing me, I was resolved he should not have him; and let him take care that I do not set eyes upon the lad in his house. This message was reported by Don

Diego, but it only made Francesco laugh. The next morning I saw Ascanio working at some trifles in wire at his master's side. As I was passing he bowed to me, and his master almost laughed me in the face. He sent again to ask through Don Diego whether I would not give Ascanio back the clothes he had received from me; but if not, he did not mind, and Ascanio should not want for clothes. When I heard this, I turned to Don Diego and said: "Don Diego, sir, in all your dealings you are the most liberal and worthy man I ever knew; but that Francesco is quite the opposite of you; he is nothing better than a worthless and dishonoured renegade. Tell him from me that if he does not bring Ascanio here himself to my shop before the bell for vespers, I will assuredly kill him; and tell Ascanio that if he does not quit that house at the hour appointed for his master, I will treat him much in the same way." Don Diego made no answer, but went and inspired such terror in Francesco that he knew not what to do with himself. Ascanio meanwhile had gone to find his father, who had come to Rome from Tagliacozzo, his birthplace; and this man also, when he heard about the row, advised Francesco to bring Ascanio back to me. Francesco said to Ascanio: "Go on your own account, and your father shall go with you." Don Diego put in: "Francesco, I foresee that something very serious will happen; you know better than I do what a man Benvenuto is; take the lad back courageously, and I will come with you." I had prepared myself, and was pacing up and down the shop waiting for the bell to vespers; my mind was made up

to do one of the bloodiest deeds which I had ever attempted in my life. Just then arrived Don Diego, Francesco, Ascanio, and his father, whom I did not know. When Ascanio entered, I gazed at the whole company with eyes of rage, and Francesco, pale as death, began as follows: "See here, I have brought back Ascanio, whom I kept with me, not thinking that I should offend you." Ascanio added humbly: "Master, pardon me; I am at your disposal here, to do whatever you shall order." Then I said: "Have you come to work out the time you promised me?" He answered yes, and that he meant never to leave me. Then I turned and told the shopboy he had beaten to hand him the bundle of clothes, and said to him: "Here are all the clothes I gave you; take with them your discharge, and go where you like." Don Diego stood astonished at this, which was quite the contrary of what he had expected; while Ascanio with his father besought me to pardon and take him back. On my asking who it was who spoke for him, he said it was his father; to whom, after many entreaties, I replied: "Because you are his father, for your sake I will take him back."

XCIV

I had formed the resolution, as I said a short while back, to go toward France; partly because I saw that the Pope did not hold me in the same esteem as formerly, my faithful service having been besmirched by lying tongues; and also because I feared lest those who had the power might play me some worse trick. So I was determined to seek better for-

tune in a foreign land, and wished to leave Rome without company or license. On the eve of my projected departure, I told my faithful friend Felice to make free use of all my effects during my absence; and in the case of my not returning, left him everything I possessed. Now there was a Perugian workman in my employ, who had helped me on those commissions from the Pope; and after paying his wages, I told him he must leave my service. He begged me in reply to let him go with me, and said he would come at his own charges; if I stopped to work for the King of France, it would certainly be better for me to have Italians by me, and in particular such persons as I knew to be capable of giving me assistance. His entreaties and arguments persuaded me to take him on the journey in the manner he proposed. Ascanio, who was present at this debate, said, half in tears: "When you took me back, I said I wished to remain with you my lifetime, and so I have it in my mind to do." I told him that nothing in the world would make me consent; but when I saw that the poor lad was preparing to follow on foot, I engaged a horse for him too, put a small valise upon the crupper, and loaded myself with far more useless baggage than I should otherwise have taken.[1]

From home I travelled to Florence, from Florence to Bologna, from Bologna to Venice, and from Venice to Padua. There my dear friend Albertaccio del Bene made me leave the inn for his house; and next day I went to kiss the hand of Messer Pietro Bembo,

[1] *He left Rome, April* 1, 1537.

who was not yet a Cardinal.[1] He received me with marks of the warmest affection which could be bestowed on any man; then turning to Albertaccio, he said: "I want Benvenuto to stay here, with all his followers, even though they be a hundred men; make then your mind up, if you want Benvenuto also, to stay here with me, for I do not mean elsewise to let you have him." Accordingly I spent a very pleasant visit at the house of that most accomplished gentleman. He had a room prepared for me which would have been too grand for a cardinal, and always insisted on my taking my meals beside him. Later on, he began to hint in very modest terms that he should greatly like me to take his portrait. I, who desired nothing in the world more, prepared some snow-white plaster in a little box, and set to work at once. The first day I spent two hours on end at my modelling, and blocked out the fine head of that eminent man with so much grace of manner that his lordship was fairly astounded. Now, though he was a man of profound erudition and without a rival in poetry, he understood nothing at all about my art; this made him think that I had finished when I had hardly begun, so that I could not make him comprehend what a long time it took to execute a thing of that sort thoroughly. At last I resolved to do it as well as I was able, and to spend the requisite time upon it; but since he wore his beard short after the Venetian fashion, I had great trouble in modelling a head to

[1] *I need hardly say that this is the Bembo who ruled over Italian literature like a dictator from the reign of Leo X. onwards. He was of a noble Venetian house; Paul III. made him Cardinal in* 1539. *He died, aged seventy-seven, in* 1547.

SHIELD ATTRIBUTED TO CELLINI
(TURIN)

my own satisfaction. However, I finished it, and judged it about the finest specimen I had produced in all the points pertaining to my art. Great was the astonishment of Messer Pietro, who conceived that I should have completed the waxen model in two hours and the steel in ten, when he found that I employed two hundred on the wax, and then was begging for leave to pursue my journey toward France. This threw him into much concern, and he implored me at least to design the reverse for his medal, which was to be a Pegasus encircled with a wreath of myrtle. I performed my task in the space of some three hours, and gave it a fine air of elegance. He was exceedingly delighted, and said: "This horse seems to me ten times more difficult to do than the little portrait on which you have bestowed so much pains. I cannot understand what made it such a labour." All the same, he kept entreating me to execute the piece in steel, exclaiming: "For Heaven's sake, do it; I know that, if you choose, you will get it quickly finished." I told him that I was not willing to make it there, but promised without fail to take it in hand wherever I might stop to work.

While this debate was being carried on I went to bargain for three horses which I wanted on my travels; and he took care that a secret watch should be kept over my proceedings, for he had vast authority in Padua; wherefore, when I proposed to pay for the horses, which were to cost five hundred ducats, their owner answered: "Illustrious artist, I make you a present of the three horses." I replied: "It is not you who give them me; and from the gen-

erous donor I cannot accept them, seeing I have been unable to present him with any specimen of my craft." The good fellow said that, if I did not take them, I should get no other horses in Padua, and should have to make my journey on foot. Upon that I returned to the magnificent Messer Pietro, who affected to be ignorant of the affair, and only begged me with marks of kindness to remain in Padua. This was contrary to my intention, for I had quite resolved to set out; therefore I had to accept the three horses, and with them we began our journey.

XCV

I chose the route through the Grisons, all other passes being unsafe on account of war. We crossed the mountains of the Alba and Berlina; it was the 8th of May, and the snow upon them lay in masses.[1] At the utmost hazard of our lives we succeeded in surmounting those two Alpine ridges; and when they had been traversed, we stopped at a place which, if I remember rightly, is called Valdistà. There we took up quarters, and at nightfall there arrived a Florentine courier named Busbacca. I had heard him mentioned as a man of character and able in his profession, but I did not know that he had forfeited that reputation by his rogueries. When he saw me in the hostelry, he addressed me by my name, said he was going on business of importance to Lyons, and entreated me to lend him money for the journey. I said

[1] *I have retained Cellini's spelling of names upon this journey. He passed the Bernina and Albula mountains, descended the valley of the Rhine to Wallenstadt, travelled by Weesen and probably Glarus to Lachen and Zurich, thence to Solothurn, Lausanne, Geneva, Lyons.*

I had no money to lend, but that if he liked to join me, I would pay his expenses as far as Lyons. The rascal wept, and wheedled me with a long story, saying: "If a poor courier employed on affairs of national consequence has fallen short of money, it is the duty of a man like you to assist him." Then he added that he was carrying things of the utmost importance from Messer Filippo Strozzi;[1] and showing me a leather case for a cup he had with him, whispered in my ear that it held a goblet of silver which contained jewels to the value of many thousands of ducats, together with letters of vast consequence, sent by Messer Filippo Strozzi. I told him that he ought to let me conceal the jewels about his own person, which would be much less dangerous than carrying them in the goblet; he might give that up to me, and, its value being probably about ten crowns, I would supply him with twenty-five on the security. To these words the courier replied that he would go with me, since he could not do otherwise, for to give up the goblet would not be to his honour.

Accordingly we struck the bargain so; and taking horse next morning, came to a lake between Valdistate and Vessa; it is fifteen miles long when one reaches Vessa. On beholding the boats upon that lake I took fright; because they are of pine, of no great size and no great thickness, loosely put together, and not even pitched. If I had not seen four German gentlemen, with their four horses, embarking in one of the same sort as ours, I should never

[1] *Filippo Strozzi was leader of the anti-Medicean party, now in exile. He fell into the hands of Duke Cosimo on the 1st of August in this year, 1537.*

have set my foot in it; indeed I should far more likely have turned tail; but when I saw their hare-brained recklessness, I took it into my head that those German waters would not drown folk, as ours do in Italy. However, my two young men kept saying to me: "Benvenuto, it is surely dangerous to embark in this craft with four horses." I replied: "You cowards, do you not observe how those four gentlemen have taken boat before us, and are going on their way with laughter? If this were wine, as indeed 'tis water, I should say that they were going gladly to drown themselves in it; but as it is but water, I know well that they have no more pleasure than we have in drowning there." The lake was fifteen miles long and about three broad; on one side rose a mountain very tall and cavernous, on the other some flat land and grassy. When we had gone about four miles, it began to storm upon the lake, and our oarsmen asked us to help in rowing; this we did awhile. I made gestures and directed them to land us on the farther shore; they said it was not possible, because there was not depth of water for the boat, and there were shoals there, which would make it go to pieces and drown us all; and still they kept on urging us to help them. The boatmen shouted one to the other, calling for assistance. When I saw them thus dismayed, my horse being an intelligent animal, I arranged the bridle on his neck and took the end of the halter with my left hand. The horse, like most of his kind, being not devoid of reason, seemed to have an instinct of my intention; for having turned his face towards the fresh grass, I meant that he

should swim and draw me after him. Just at that moment a great wave broke over the boat. Ascanio shrieked out: "Mercy, my father; save me," and wanted to throw himself upon my neck. Accordingly, I laid hand to my little dagger, and told them to do as I had shown them, seeing that the horses would save their lives as well as I too hoped to escape with mine by the same means; but that if he tried to jump on me, I should kill him. So we went forward several miles in this great peril of our lives.

XCVI

When we had reached the middle of the lake, we found a little bit of level ground where we could land, and I saw that those four German gentlemen had already come to shore there; but on our wishing to disembark, the boatmen would hear nothing of it. Then I said to my young men: "Now is the time to show what stuff we are made of; so draw your swords, and force these fellows to put us on shore." This we did, not however without difficulty, for they offered a stubborn resistance. When at last we got to land, we had to climb that mountain for two miles, and it was more troublesome than getting up a ladder. I was completely clothed in mail, with big boots, and a gun in my hand; and it was raining as though the fountains of the heavens were opened. Those devils, the German gentlemen, leading their little horses by the bridle, accomplished miracles of agility; but our animals were not up to the business, and we burst with the fatigue of making them ascend that hill of difficulty. We had

climbed a little way, when Ascanio's horse, an excellent beast of Hungarian race, made a false step. He was going a few paces before the courier Busbacca, to whom Ascanio had given his lance to carry for him. Well, the path was so bad that the horse stumbled, and went on scrambling backwards, without being able to regain his footing, till he stuck upon the point of the lance, which that rogue of a courier had not the wit to keep out of his way. The weapon passed right through his throat; and when my other workman went to help him, his horse also, a black-coloured animal, slipped towards the lake, and held on by some shrub which offered but a slight support. This horse was carrying a pair of saddle-bags, which contained all my money and other valuables. I cried out to the young man to save his own life, and let the horse go to the devil. The fall was more than a mile of precipitous descent above the waters of the lake. Just below the place our boatmen had taken up their station; so that if the horse fell, he would have come precisely on them. I was ahead of the whole company, and we waited to see the horse plunge headlong; it seemed certain that he must go to perdition. During this I said to my young men: "Be under no concern; let us save our lives, and give thanks to God for all that happens. I am only distressed for that poor fellow Busbacca, who tied his goblet and his jewels to the value of several thousands of ducats on the horse's saddle-bow, thinking that the safest place. My things are but a few hundred crowns, and I am in no fear whatever, if only I get God's protection." Then Busbacca cried out:

"I am not sorry for my own loss, but for yours." "Why," said I to him, "are you sorry for my trifles, and not for all that property of yours?" He answered: "I will tell you in God's name; in these circumstances and at the point of peril we have reached, truth must be spoken. I know that yours are crowns, and are so in good sooth; but that case in which I said I had so many jewels and other lies, is all full of caviare." On hearing this I could not hold from laughing; my young men laughed too; and he began to cry. The horse extricated itself by a great effort when we had given it up for lost. So then, still laughing, we summoned our forces, and bent ourselves to making the ascent. The four German gentlemen, having gained the top before us, sent down some folk who gave us aid. Thus at length we reached our lodging in the wilderness. Here, being wet to the skin, tired out, and famished, we were most agreeably entertained; we dried ourselves, took rest, and satisfied our hunger, while certain wild herbs were applied to the wounded horse. They pointed out to us the plant in question, of which the hedges were full; and we were told that if the wound was kept continually plugged with its leaves, the beast would not only recover, but would serve us just as if it had sustained no injury. We proceeded to do as they advised. Then having thanked those gentlemen, and feeling ourselves entirely refreshed, we quitted the place, and travelled onwards, thanking God for saving us from such great perils.

XCVII

We reached a town beyond Vessa, where we passed the night, and heard a watchman through all the hours singing very agreeably; for all the houses of that city being built of pine wood, it was the watchman's only business to warn folk against fire. Busbacca's nerves had been quite shaken by the day's adventures; accordingly, each hour when the watchman sang, he called out in his sleep: "Ah God, I am drowning!" That was because of the fright he had had; and besides, he had got drunk in the evening, because he would sit boozing with all the Germans who were there; and sometimes he cried: "I am burning," and sometimes: "I am drowning;" and at other times he thought he was in hell, and tortured with that caviare suspended round his throat.

This night was so amusing, that it turned all our troubles into laughter. In the morning we rose with very fine weather, and went to dine in a smiling little place called Lacca. Here we obtained excellent entertainment, and then engaged guides, who were returning to a town called Surich. The guide who attended us went along the dyked bank of a lake; there was no other road; and the dyke itself was covered with water, so that the reckless fellow slipped, and fell together with his horse beneath the water. I, who was but a few steps behind him, stopped my horse, and waited to see the donkey get out of the water. Just as if nothing had happened, he began to sing again, and made signs to me to follow. I broke away upon the right hand, and got through some

hedges, making my young men and Busbacca take that way. The guide shouted in German that if the folk of those parts saw me they would put me to death. However, we passed forward, and escaped that other storm.

So we arrived at Surich, a marvellous city, bright and polished like a little gem. There we rested a whole day, then left betimes one morning, and reached another fair city called Solutorno. Thence we came to Usanna, from Usanna to Ginevra, from Ginevra to Lione, always singing and laughing. At Lione I rested four days, and had much pleasant intercourse with some of my friends there; I was also repaid what I had spent upon Busbacca; afterwards I set out upon the road to Paris. This was a delightful journey, except that when we reached Palissa[1] a band of venturers tried to murder us,[2] and it was only by great courage and address that we got free from them. From that point onward we travelled to Paris without the least trouble in the world. Always singing and laughing, we arrived safely at our destination.

XCVIII

After taking some repose in Paris, I went to visit the painter Rosso, who was in the King's service. I thought to find in him one of the sincerest friends I had in the world, seeing that in Rome I had done him the greatest benefits which one man can confer upon another. As these may be described briefly,

[1] *La Palice.*

[2] *Cellini, in the narrative of his second French journey, explains that these venturieri were a notable crew of very daring brigands in the Lyonese province.*

I will not here omit their mention, in order to expose the shamelessness of such ingratitude. While he was in Rome, then, being a man given to backbiting, he spoke so ill of Ràffaello da Urbino's works, that the pupils of the latter were quite resolved to murder him. From this peril I saved him by keeping a close watch upon him day and night. Again, the evil things said by Rosso against San Gallo,[1] that excellent architect, caused the latter to get work taken from him which he had previously procured for him from Messer Agnolo da Cesi; and after this San Gallo used his influence so strenuously against him that he must have been brought to the verge of starvation, had not I pitied his condition and lent him some scores of crowns to live upon. So, then, not having been repaid, and knowing that he held employment under the King, I went, as I have said, to look him up. I did not merely expect him to discharge his debt, but also to show me favour and assist in placing me in that great monarch's service.

When Rosso set eyes on me, his countenance changed suddenly, and he exclaimed: "Benvenuto, you have taken this long journey at great charges to your loss; especially at this present time, when all men's thoughts are occupied with war, and not with the bagatelles of our profession." I replied that I had brought money enough to take me back to Rome as I had come to Paris, and that this was not the proper return for the pains I had endured for him, and that now I began to believe what Maestro Antonio da San Gallo said of him. When he tried

[1] *Antonio da San Gallo, one of the best architects of the later Renaissance.*

to turn the matter into jest on this exposure of his baseness, I showed him a letter of exchange for five hundred crowns upon Ricciardo del Bene. Then the rascal was ashamed, and wanted to detain me almost by force; but I laughed at him, and took my leave in the company of a painter whom I found there. This man was called Sguazzella:[1] he too was a Florentine; and I went to lodge in his house, with three horses and three servants, at so much per week. He treated me very well, and was even better paid by me in return.

Afterwards I sought audience of the King, through the introduction of his treasurer, Messer Giuliano Buonaccorti.[2] I met, however, with considerable delays, owing, as I did not then know, to the strenuous exertions Rosso made against my admission to his Majesty. When Messer Giuliano became aware of this, he took me down at once to Fontana Bilio,[3] and brought me into the presence of the King, who granted me a whole hour of very gracious audience. Since he was then on the point of setting out for Lyons, he told Messer Giuliano to take me with him, adding that on the journey we could discuss some works of art his Majesty had it in his head to execute. Accordingly, I followed the court; and on the way I entered into close relations with the Cardinal of Ferrara, who had not at that period obtained the hat.[4] Every evening I used to hold long conver-

[1] *A pupil of Andrea del Sarto, who went with him to France and settled there.*

[2] *A Florentine exile mentioned by Varchi.*

[3] *Fontainebleau. Cellini always writes it as above.*

[4] *Ippolito d'Este, son of Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara; Archbishop of Milan at the age of fifteen; Cardinal in 1539; spent a large part of his life in France.*

sations with the Cardinal, in the course of which his lordship advised me to remain at an abbey of his in Lyons, and there to abide at ease until the King returned from this campaign, adding that he was going on to Grenoble, and that I should enjoy every convenience in the abbey.

When we reached Lyons I was already ill, and my lad Ascanio had taken a quartan fever. The French and their court were both grown irksome to me, and I counted the hours till I could find myself again in Rome. On seeing my anxiety to return home, the Cardinal gave me money sufficient for making him a silver bason and jug. So we took good horses, and set our faces in the direction of Rome, passing the Simplon, and travelling for some while in the company of certain Frenchmen; Ascanio troubled by his quartan, and I by a slow fever which I found it quite impossible to throw off. I had, moreover, got my stomach out of order to such an extent, that for the space of four months, as I verily believe, I hardly ate one whole loaf of bread in the week; and great was my longing to reach Italy, being desirous to die there rather than in France.

## XCIX

When we had crossed the mountains of the Simplon, we came to a river near a place called Indevedro.[1] It was broad and very deep, spanned by a long narrow bridge without ramparts. That morning a thick white frost had fallen; and when I reached the bridge, riding before the rest, I recognised how dangerous

[1] *Probably the Doveria in the Valdivedro.*

it was, and bade my servants and young men dismount and lead their horses. So I got across without accident, and rode on talking with one of the Frenchmen, whose condition was that of a gentleman. The other, who was a scrivener, lagged a little way behind, jeering the French gentleman and me because we had been so frightened by nothing at all as to give ourselves the trouble of walking. I turned round, and seeing him upon the middle of the bridge, begged him to come gently, since the place was very dangerous. The fellow, true to his French nature, cried out in French that I was a man of poor spirit, and that there was no danger whatsoever. While he spoke these words and urged his horse forward, the animal suddenly slipped over the bridge, and fell with legs in air close to a huge rock there was there. Now God is very often merciful to madmen; so the two beasts, human and equine, plunged together into a deep wide pool, where both of them went down below the water. On seeing what had happened, I set off running at full speed, scrambled with much difficulty on to the rock, and dangling over from it, seized the skirt of the scrivener's gown and pulled him up, for he was still submerged beneath the surface. He had drunk his bellyful of water, and was within an ace of being drowned. I then, beholding him out of danger, congratulated the man upon my having been the means of rescuing his life. The fellow to this answered me in French, that I had done nothing; the important things to save were his writings, worth many scores of crowns; and these words he seemed to say in anger, dripping wet and

spluttering the while. Thereupon, I turned round to our guides, and ordered them to help the brute, adding that I would see them paid. One of them with great address and trouble set himself to the business, and picked up all the fellow's writings, so that he lost not one of them; the other guide refused to trouble himself by rendering any assistance.

I ought here to say that we had made a purse up, and that I performed the part of paymaster. So, when we reached the place I mentioned, and had dined, I drew some coins from the common purse and gave them to the guide who helped to draw him from the water. Thereupon the fellow called out that I might pay them out of my own pocket; he had no intention of giving the man more than what had been agreed on for his services as guide. Upon this I retorted with insulting language. Then the other guide, who had done nothing, came up and demanded to be rewarded also. I told him that the one who had borne the cross deserved the recompense. He cried out that he would presently show me a cross which should make me repent. I replied that I would light a candle at that cross, which should, I hoped, make him to be the first to weep his folly. The village we were in lay on the frontier between Venice and the Germans. So the guide ran off to bring the folk together, and came, followed by a crowd, with a boar-spear in his hand. Mounted on my good steed, I lowered the barrel of my arquebuse, and turning to my comrades, cried: "At the first shot I shall bring that fellow down; do you likewise your duty, for these are highway robbers, who have used this

little incident to contrive our murder." The innkeeper at whose house we had dined called one of the leaders, an imposing old man, and begged him to put a stop to the disorder, saying: "This is a most courageous young man; you may cut him to pieces, but he will certainly kill a lot of you, and perhaps will escape your hands after doing all the mischief he is able." So matters calmed down: and the old man, their leader, said to me: "Go in peace; you would not have much to boast of against us, even if you had a hundred men to back you." I recognised the truth of his words, and had indeed made up my mind to die among them; therefore, when no further insults were cast at me, I shook my head and exclaimed: "I should certainly have done my utmost to prove I am no statue, but a man of flesh and spirit." Then we resumed our journey; and that evening, at the first lodging we came to, settled our accounts together. There I parted forever from that beast of a Frenchman, remaining on very friendly terms with the other, who was a gentleman. Afterwards I reached Ferrara, with my three horses and no other company.

Having dismounted, I went to court in order to pay my reverence to the Duke, and gain permission to depart next morning for Loreto. When I had waited until two hours after nightfall, his Excellency appeared. I kissed his hands; he received me with much courtesy, and ordered that water should be brought for me to wash my hands before eating. To this compliment I made a pleasant answer: "Most excellent lord, it is now more than four months

that I have eaten only just enough to keep life together; knowing therefore that I could not enjoy the delicacies of your royal table, I will stay and talk with you while your Excellency is supping; in this way we shall both have more pleasure than if I were to sup with you." Accordingly, we entered into conversation, and prolonged it for the next three hours. At that time I took my leave, and when I got back to the inn, found a most excellent meal ready; for the Duke had sent me the plates from his own banquet, together with some famous wine. Having now fasted two full hours beyond my usual hour for supping, I fell to with hearty appetite; and this was the first time since four months that I felt the power or will to eat.

C

Leaving Ferrara in the morning, I went to Santa Maria at Loreto; and thence, having performed my devotions, pursued the journey to Rome. There I found my most faithful Felice, to whom I abandoned my old shop with all its furniture and appurtenances, and opened another, much larger and roomier, next to Sugherello, the perfumer. I thought for certain that the great King Francis would not have remembered me. Therefore I accepted commissions from several noblemen; and in the meanwhile began the bason and jug ordered by the Cardinal of Ferrara. I had a crowd of workmen, and many large affairs on hand in gold and silver.

Now the arrangement I had made with that Perugian workman[1] was that he should write down all

[1] *In his Ricordi Cellini calls the man Girolamo Pascucci.*

the moneys which had been disbursed on his account, chiefly for clothes and divers other sundries; and these, together with the costs of travelling, amounted to about seventy crowns. We agreed that he should discharge the debt by monthly payments of three crowns; and this he was well able to do, since he gained more than eight through me. At the end of two months the rascal decamped from my shop, leaving me in the lurch with a mass of business on my hands, and saying that he did not mean to pay me a farthing more. I was resolved to seek redress, but allowed myself to be persuaded to do so by the way of justice. At first I thought of lopping off an arm of his; and assuredly I should have done so, if my friends had not told me that it was a mistake, seeing I should lose my money and perhaps Rome too a second time, forasmuch as blows cannot be measured, and that with the agreement I held of his I could at any moment have him taken up. I listened to their advice, though I should have liked to conduct the affair more freely. As a matter of fact, I sued him before the auditor of the Camera, and gained my suit; in consequence of that decree, for which I waited several months, I had him thrown into prison. At the same time I was overwhelmed with large commissions; among others, I had to supply all the ornaments of gold and jewels for the wife of Signor Gierolimo Orsino, father of Signor Paolo, who is now the son-in-law of our Duke Cosimo.[1] These things

[1] *He was Duke of Bracciano, father of Duke Paolo, who married Isabella de' Medici, and murdered her before his second marriage with Vittoria Accoramboni. See my Renaissance in Italy, vol. vi.*

I had nearly finished; yet others of the greatest consequence were always coming in. I employed eight work-people, and worked day and night together with them, for the sake alike of honour and of gain.

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